

THE
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
H E B R E W S.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I WOULD seek grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of this blessed portion of his holy word, to enter upon the perusal of it, with the most earnest prayer, and praise; and with the most profound humility and joy. No part of the word of GOD hath in it more blessed views of the glory of CHRIST'S Person, and GODHEAD, and Offices, and Character. And none, which more blessedly brings him home to the affections of his people, under all the endearments of union and interest, as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST may glorify Him, to his Church's apprehension, under all; and form him, in every heart of his redeemed, *the hope of glory.*

There have been doubts, in the minds of some, whether the Apostle *Paul* was, or was not, the Pen-man, GOD the SPIRIT made use of, for writing this Epistle. But none of the faithful taught of GOD, ever doubted, that the Epistle itself, was the immediate work of divine inspiration. Indeed every age of the Church, hath furnished witnesses for GOD, in confirmation of its divine authority. The seal of the SPIRIT, in the heart, to the truths of GOD, written there, becomes an infallible testimony. Hence the royal Psalmist exclaimed; *I shall never forget thy word, for by it thou hast quickened me.* Psm. cxix. 93. And whoever reads the book of the Hebrews, with an enlightened eye, under the leadings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of it, will not fail to discover, that the Apostle *Paul*, is evidently the inspired Pen-man of it. What he saith of *Timothy*, in the last Chapter, verse 23, when it be considered, that *Paul* wrote it from *Rome*, and the probable date of it also, Anno 63 or 64; form a correspondence, to the Apostle's then imprisonment. And yet more decisive is *Peter's* testimony. For *Peter's* Epistle was written to the strangers, (that is, the ten tribes of the *Jews* or *Hebrews*,) scattered at that time, throughout the

lower *Asia*. 1 Pet. i. 1. In this Epistle *Peter* refers to this book of the *Hebrews*, when he saith to them, *our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you.* 2 Pet. iii. 15. Now no part of *Paul's* writings but this Epistle, was written to the *Jews*. All his other Epistles were to the *Gentile Churches*, and to particular persons, as *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*. And this also explains the cause, wherefore the Apostle did not begin this Epistle to the *Hebrews* with his usual salutation.

I do not think it necessary in this place, to enter into a large, and circumstantial account, of the Contents of this blessed Epistle. All the interesting particulars, will meet us in their proper place. It will be sufficient here to observe, that the one, great, and leading design, of the whole is, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Hence his Person, as GOD, and as GOD-MAN; his offices, characters, relations; his royal, prophetic, and priestly offices; are most blessedly set forth. And what is worthy of most especial notice is, that the human nature of CHRIST, is displayed in so dear, and interesting a light; and the precious consequences resulting from it to his people, so enlarged upon, and recommended to their tenderest regard; as is not perhaps so fully inculcated in any other of the Apostle's writings. So that upon the whole, the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is a most blessed part of the divine word: and for which the Church of the faithful, can never be sufficiently thankful to GOD the HOLY GHOST. I will no longer detain the Reader, from entering upon its perusal, than only first to look up with prayer, to the Almighty Author of it, that while passing over it, he will be pleased, mercifully to shine on the heart, of both the Writer, and the Reader, (if it be his holy will,) of this *Poor Man's Commentary*. And from hence, that the LORD JESUS, who is the whole sum and substance of its contents, may be made manifest in every part of it; so blessedly seen by faith, and enjoyed in hope, as to be glorified in the heart; and GOD the FATHER glorified in his dear SON. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

GOD is declared in the opening of this Chapter, as speaking to the Church, by his SON. Then follows a short, but exalted Description, of the Glories of CHRIST's Person and Character.

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

From the opening of the Epistle, in the solemn and striking manner, in which we have the SON of GOD introduced; I humbly conceive, that GOD the SPIRIT, intended thereby that the Church, should have proper conceptions of the dignity of his Person, before we are brought acquainted with the nature of his offices. Hence a line of everlasting distinction, is at once drawn, between him, and the highest order, of all his servants, whether angels, or men. And whereas in all former revelations, GOD spake in time past, through the ministry of the Prophets; now in this last and final dispensation, he speaks openly to the Church by his SON.

Now before the Reader goes a step further, I pray him to pause and consider, in what a glorious display of dignity and power, the SON of GOD is here introduced. In no method, but the Gospel method, could this manifestation be made. When GOD went forth in acts of *creation*, there was nothing of a *personal* nature in relation to the manner of existence, in the divine essence made known. The HOLY THREE in ONE, are represented indeed, as conferring on the subject of forming man's creation, different from what is said at the creation of other inferior creatures; but nothing more, by which the personal manifestations of each might be known. Gen. i. 26. It is in *redemption*, the several distinct acts of each glorious Person, in the GODHEAD, become manifest: so that we may truly say, the first footsteps of the HOLY Persons of the GODHEAD are first traced in CHRIST; and the love of GOD in CHRIST to his Church here first broke forth, in open revelation to the Church. The SON of GOD comes forth from the invisibility, in which GOD in his threefold character of Persons by his very nature, and essence dwells; and makes known the sacred purposes of his will. GOD *hath spoken to us by his SON*. To this agrees in beautiful correspondence, what another inspired Apostle hath recorded: *No man hath seen GOD at any time. The only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him.* John i. 18. How the SON of GOD comes, and through what medium, his communications are made; is spoken of elsewhere. We are informed of his incarnation, and all the blessed events connected with that mysterious act, in those scriptures, which sum up the account of his wonderful Person, and character, by saying, that *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.* Coloss. ii. 9. But in this place, no more is said, in relation to the difference between him, and his servants, than that the last days revelation, are not as were the former. This glorious truth, marks the striking distinction; and here it stands, as the title page, and contents of this whole book of GOD; GOD *hath spoken to us by his SON*. I pray the Reader, to note this, in the deepest memorandums of his heart, in proof of the GODHEAD of CHRIST and then prosecute what next follows, concerning his Person and Offices.

He is said, to be *appointed heir of all things*. This cannot be said of him as GOD; for his heirship, if it were supposed taken in this sense, could not be an *appointed* heirship: for by birth-right it is

his. But in the mystery of his Person, it is spoken of him as God-Man. And in this sense, he is truly, and properly *appointed heir of all things*. And the Church, are made heirs in him. *Heirs of God, and joint heirs with CHRIST*. Rom. viii. 17. Oh! the privilege of God's children!

By whom also he made the worlds. Yes! this is a most clear, and decided doctrine, of scripture. God created *all things by JESUS CHRIST*. Ephes. iii. 9. And according to the HOLY GHOST's account, by *Paul*, to the Church of the *Colossians*: not only all things were created by Him, but *for Him*; and by Him, *all things consist*. Indeed from that most blessed scripture, as well as some others, we are led to conclude, that without this mysterious Person, in his double nature, God and Man, in One; there could have been nothing, for creation to have rested upon. Nothing could have stood, or subsisted, but by dependence upon God. And yet nothing could have stood, in any way of subsistence *with God*. In the person therefore of God-Man alone, we find an adequate foundation to rest upon. And of Him, and Him only, as is soon after said, in this chapter, and confirmed by other scriptures, we find One competent to the Almighty work, of *upholding all things by the word of his power*. John i. 3, 4. I pray the Reader not to pass away before that he hath looked for further confirmation, to *Colossians i. 15—17*, with Commentary.

3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The HOLY GHOST by his servant hath here given a further description of the infinite dignity of CHRIST's Person. *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person; and upholding all things by the word of his power*. I pray the Reader to mark, with due attention, those glorious distinctions of character, by which the Person of CHRIST is here revealed. He is said, to be *the brightness of his FATHER's glory*. Not *made* so, but *being* so. Consequently the same oneness of nature, and essence with the FATHER. And when it is added, *the express image of his Person*; meaning, that by virtue of the SON of God, assuming manhood, he becomes the visible representation, of what without this medium, was, and is, and cannot but be invisible; agreeably to that blessed scripture, that *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily*. Coloss. ii. 9. And in relation to his *upholding all things by the word of his power*, nothing can be more plain, than that, as God-Man Mediator, he hath *power given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the FATHER hath given him*. John xvii. 2. And no less, doth he uphold, the whole of Creation, which he hath made; being the natural, and immediate result, for which God in his threefold character of Persons, went forth in acts of creation, by JESUS CHRIST, that he, as the visible JEHOVAH, in all Covenant transactions; should reign, and controul all things, in all the

departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. Dan. iv. 34, 35. Ephes. i. 10. Reader! pause, before you proceed further; and contemplate the glories of his Person, as here drawn, by the HOLY GHOST. Well might *Paul* desire, to relinquish all other knowledge, for the knowledge of CHRIST. Philip. iii. 8, 9. And well might he pray, for the Church, that this, above all other blessings, might be their portion. Ephes. i. 15, to the end. And yet, Reader! this is He *whom man despiseth!* This is He *whom the nation abhorreth.* Isaiah xlix. 7. What man? What nation? Yea, every man, and every nation, unacquainted with his mysterious Person, GOD-MAN! And is not the present, as well as the nation of the Jews of old, a CHRIST-despising generation? But concerning those, to whom God the HOLY GHOST hath revealed him, JESUS thus speaks; FATHER! *I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.* John xvii. 24.

But the scripture proceeds, *When he had by himself, purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Reader! pray observe, what an emphasis, God the HOLY GHOST, lays on this account, of CHRIST. The purging our sins, is made to appear, a greater work in the *Heir of all things*; than even the *creation of the worlds* by him. For the *one* was simply the act of his Almighty power: But the *other*, is not only the act of his Almighty power, and his Almighty love; but the giving of himself in the purging our sins by himself. Not merely, an exertion of power: not the gift of his property, his works, or actions, or will, or design: not giving his creation, and all the creatures he had given life unto, in calling them into being; not these; but *himself*, his Person, his whole human nature; as he himself calleth it, *my flesh which I will give for the life of the world!* John vi. 51. The preciousness of the work; the love of Him that performed it; and the extensiveness of the efficacy of it; none but God himself, can form any idea thereof. It is said, that his very name is such, that *no man knew but he himself.* Rev. xix. 12. And if so, what must be his work: and such a work, as that of purging our sins by himself? Reader! I know not how to leave the sweet meditation. JESUS *by himself*, purged our sins! It was *himself*, his own proper Person; himself, both Altar, Priest, and Sacrifice. He made himself an offering for sins; yea, to sum up all, as this sweet scripture hath it, for none can be more full, or more expressive: *by himself purged our sins!* Oh! the love of God which passeth knowledge! The FATHER gave his SON; *his elect in whom his soul delighteth.* The SON gave himself, and by himself purged our sins. And God the HOLY GHOST confirms the whole by regeneration, to his redeemed; for in the whole manifestations of grace, *he was justified in the SPIRIT.* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

But we must not stop here. When he had by himself purged our sins, *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* There is a vast deal of importance in those scriptures, connected together: and it is plain, that they are joined here by the HOLY GHOST, purposely for the comfort and joy of the Church, on this account. It is, as if the LORD had said, by way of confirmation, that Jesus by himself hath purged and done away all your sins; and he is returned to heaven, and is sat down on the right hand of the Majesty

on high, having finished the work the FATHER gave him to do. Paul in one scripture, and Peter in another, make this return of CHRIST to heaven, as the most complete answer, to all the accusations of hell, and the sinner's conscience; yea, to all the demands of God's law, and justice on account of sin. *Who (saith Paul) shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.* Rom. viii. 33, 39. As much as to say; what fears can now arise, to distress the LORD's redeemed ones? GOD the FATHER hath received him, at the heavenly Court, and said unto him; *sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Psm. cx. 1. And Peter following up the same blessed truth, with a rapture of holy joy and triumph, tells the Church, that CHRIST is *gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels, and authorities, being made subject unto him.* 1 Pet. iii. 22. Reader! do not lose sight of these blessed things, for they are most blessed. Your JESUS would never have returned to his FATHER, had his work been unfinished. He hereby proved, that he had by himself purged our sins. Hence this act, most fully certified, that not only sin, with all its tremendous consequences, was for ever done away: but that justification to life, was also secured, by his entrance into heaven. Hence that sweet scripture; *he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* Rom. iv. 25. Neither is this all. For CHRIST's sitting down, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is spoken of, in another scripture, as contrasted to the actions of those Priests who daily stand to minister in sacrifices. *For every priest, standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin. But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God: from henceforth expecting, till his enemies be made his footstool: (according to God's word and oath. Psm. cx.) for by one offering, he hath perfected, for ever, them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 11—14. Nothing can be more beautiful and decisive, on this ground than those different actions of standing and sitting. The priests of old stood, while in their ministry, in proof that they had no power to finish it: and their daily labors, as daily carried conviction with them, that they were only, *the shadow of good things to come.* Heb. x. 1. But JESUS when he had by himself purged our sins, returned to glory, and sat down, in proof, that he had entered into his rest *once for all, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Heb. ix. 11, 12. Once more. The HOLY GHOST is express also to teach the Church, that in this entrance of CHRIST into heaven, it is as our fore-runner; Heb. vi. 20. And where his redeemed must follow. Nay, we are said already by faith to *sit together with CHRIST in heavenly places.* Ephes. ii. 6. So that the justified believer in CHRIST, is now by faith, already in heaven, with his glorious Head: and shortly will be there in person. For so the promise runs. *Where I am; there shall ye be also.* John xiv. 1—3. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my FATHER in his throne.* Rev. iii. 20. Reader! think what precious things, are contained in the bosom of this short, but comprehensive scripture, concerning our glorious

LORD : when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

We shall have occasion in the next Chapter, somewhat more particularly to treat of the nature of Angels, when we come to speak of the SON of GOD, passing by the nature of Angels, to take upon him the seed of *Abraham*. I therefore for the present pass it by, with only just observing, that the superiority of the SON of GOD in our Nature, GOD and Man, to that of Angels is evident, from every part of scripture, and with the most decided testimony. A few of the prominent points, in this Chapter, explained by other portions in the word of GOD, will set this matter in a clear light.

First. It is here said, that *he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*: that is, than Angels. Now by inheritance, it should be observed, that as SON of GOD, one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever; his inheritance is his, by right, and not acquired, or given. But as *heir of all things* to which he is appointed as GOD-Man-Mediator, here in this sense, he hath obtained this dignity, and which is infinitely above all Angels. His GOD-HEAD confers to his human nature a dignity, infinitely superior to Angels. For such things can never be spoken of them; neither can any of them be called *heir of all things*.

Secondly. We not only hear GOD's command issuing from the throne, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, or Angels to worship him; but we have on scripture record, an account of their adoration of CHRIST, as GOD-Man-Mediator. *Isaiah* the Prophet hath given the relation of a vision, which he saw of the kind. And that there might be no misapprehension concerning whose glory it was: *John* the Apostle declared the glory the prophet saw, was the glory of CHRIST. Compare *Isaiah* vi. 1. with *John* xii. 41. And we have another account to the same purport, *Rev.* v. 11—13.

Thirdly. CHRIST is expressly declared to be, not only the Creator of all things, visible, and invisible; whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; but he is said to be the head of them, and they are all subject unto him. Compare *Coloss.* i. 16. with *I*

Pet. iii. 22. So that they are his ministering servants; and, as the several principles of fire and lightening, and winds, and tempests, are directed by Him, in their agency: so it is said, that *he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

And all these things are said in a way, so immediately directed for the exaltation of CHRIST, in opposition to Angels; that it is demanded by way of question, When, or where, are Angels so distinguished? To which of the Angels, (said the LORD,) at any time; *Thou art my SON: this day have I begotten thee?* To which the answer must be, Yea, and is implied in the very question; to none of them! Of whom among them did ever GOD say, *I will be to him a FATHER, and he shall be to me a SON?* To not a single creature of them. So that while GOD is the head of dominion to Angels; in CHRIST alone, is he united by nature. And therefore CHRIST is by so much better than the Angels, in that he hath, as GOD an inheritance of his own, underived; and as GOD-Man, an obtained inheritance, as being *appointed heir of all things.* See Chap. ii. through-out.

8 But unto the Son *he saith,* Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

What a glorious testimony is here given, to the Person of CHRIST, as CHRIST; that is, as GOD-Man-Mediator. True indeed, as GOD, one with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, his throne of GODHEAD is for ever and ever. And under this view, such things as ascribe eternity, glory, and all other divine attributes, are all his. But very evidently, from the quotation of this passage from the Prophet, when celebrating the glories of the Messiah, Psm. xlv. 6, 7. As well as what follows, in what is said of his fellows; the words both in the Prophet, and in this quotation by the Apostle, are spoken of CHRIST, as GOD-Man-Mediator. And most blessed they are indeed. CHRIST is all this, and every thing, that is great, and glorious, as the Head, and Husband of his Church, and people. But I need not, in this place, dwell upon the subject. All the Bible is full of CHRIST, and his royalty. I will rather beg, to direct the attention of the Reader to what is here said of CHRIST's fellows: for some very sweet, and precious views, according to my apprehension, arise herefrom.

The name of *fellows*, according to the original, carries with it somewhat very near, and intimate. Partners, Consorts, companions; meaning a right in all that CHRIST hath, in his headship; which is communicable both here in grace, and hereafter in glory. He, the Sun to fill them with light. He the fountain from which the streams which flow, *make glad the city of GOD.* Hence, as One, and the same anointing, which was poured by the HOLY GHOST on CHRIST, descended to all the members of his body; they are called by the same names, as their glorious LORD. He is king in Sion. And

they are *made kings and priests by him unto God and the FATHER*. Rev. i. 6. He is said to have the SPIRIT given unto him, *without measure*. John iii. 35. And to every one of them is given grace, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST*. Ephes. iv. 7. And hence, the words in this verse, which are rendered *above thy fellows*; may be read also *for thy fellows*: and both are equally beautiful, and correct.

But under this view of the subject, what I would more immediately call upon the Reader to remark with me, on this fellowship, this partnership, of CHRIST, and his Church; CHRIST and his members, his body is this; that the anointing, our glorious Head; *this man of unction*, as he is called, or *this holy thing*: Luke i. 35. Was, and is, with an express eye to his body the Church. CHRIST, as GOD is called JEHOVAH's fellow. Zech. xiii. 6. And CHRIST, as man, in this place, as well as elsewhere, hath his fellows, in his members. Psm. xlv. 7. Zech. iii. 8. It forms one of the sweetest of all subjects, the contemplation of CHRIST, and his Church, in this oneness, and fellowship. The whole Church in every individual member, of his mystical body, were from all eternity chosen in CHRIST, and set up with CHRIST: And the whole body, in the purpose of JEHOVAH, were chosen in him, and for him, as fellows, and partners, and companions; to receive *from* him, and to enjoy *with* him, all that is communicable, in name, and honor, and happiness, and affection; during the time-state of grace upon earth: and glory in heaven.

Reader! beg for grace from the LORD the SPIRIT, to meditate upon the blissful subject; for indeed, and in truth, it is most blissful. Very certain it is, that God our FATHER's choosing the Church in CHRIST; and adopting the Church as Sons by CHRIST, was for this express purpose, for the glorifying of his dear Son, in his fellows, and members. It is GOD's choosing us in CHRIST; giving us this relationship in CHRIST; making us one with CHRIST; fellows with CHRIST; as CHRIST is fellow to GOD; which forms the foundation of all the blessedness which follows. There cannot be the shadow of a doubt, but in the very will, and purpose of JEHOVAH, that his dear Son should take upon him human nature; the first, the great, the ultimate end, and design of all, connected with the vast scheme, was to manifest the glory of the Son of GOD. Every thing therefore in all the subsequent events, was so ordered and arranged, as should minister best to this one purpose. The glory of CHRIST's Person shall be advanced in every thing. Will fellows, partners, companions, to whom CHRIST, by communicating of himself, contribute to this end? JESUS shall have a Church. Will the fall of this Church afford occasion to the glories of redemption? The whole events included in this high dispensation shall also follow, that JESUS shall get glory in our redemption. In short, whatever hath a tendency to magnify the personal glory of the Son of GOD, shall take place, for GOD's design all along, and from beginning to end, is to glorify the LORD JESUS. And most blessed as it is, to know, that from everlasting, GOD our FATHER hath loved the Church, with an everlasting love; and in proof hath chosen, predestinated, adopted, and accepted the Church in the Beloved, as children by JESUS CHRIST to himself: yet all, and every part, of this vast dispensation, in this manifold wisdom of GOD, is,

with an eye, to the Person of JESUS. *You have not chosen me* (saith CHRIST) *but I have chosen you.* John xv. 16. God's choice of the Church, is for CHRIST, and his glory. And even the recovery of our nature from the *Adam-fall* of sin: though it hath our salvation in view, by the wonderful means adopted; yet this, is but the secondary consideration in God's design; the first, and grand object, is, to exalt the Personal glory of his dear SON. So sweetly speaks the LORD, by the Prophet: *Behold! my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man; and his form more than the sons of men. So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.* Isaiah lii. 13—15.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he, at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

I will not, (for I must not,) trespass any further in this Chapter. But oh! what a subject is here again opened to our meditation, on the eternal nature of CHRIST's Person; and of the everlasting duration of his kingdom! How endeared to CHRIST's Church, is the consideration of the unchangeable, unfading, and eternal nature of CHRIST's love to his people. Amidst all changes, there is none can be here. JESUS lives, and loves, and reigns for ever. He is the Rock of Ages. LORD! (said one of old, under the fixed conviction by grace of these things,) *thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations!* Psm. xc. 1. And here the redeemed soul finds a safe, and sure hiding place, from every storm, and evil. What though friends die, JESUS liveth. What, though the earth be removed, or we are removed from it; this sweet view of JESUS, and an assured oneness in JESUS, brings up all. The heavens may perish, and all things below change like a vesture. Here is the believer's confidence: *But thou art the same!* The same in thy Person. The same in thy love. And the same, in all the Covenant-securities for ever. Hallelu-JAH! The LORD God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

PRAISES to the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD! And praises to his holy name, that he hath been pleased to make known the fellowship of the mystery, hid in God from the beginning of the world, which in times past was opened in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets; but now, in these last days, fully, and completely made known to the Church, in the Person of his dear SON! LORD JESUS! we hail thy glorious appearing, in all the revelations thou hast made! We adore thee for thy *natural*, and *essential* glories, as One with the FATHER. We adore thee in all thy *mediatorial* characters, as God-Man, *heir of all things*! And we would desire grace to praise thee, love thee, delight in thee, for all thy finished redemption-work, and grace, manifested to thy Church, and People; that when by thyself thou hadst purged our sins, thou didst take thy seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Oh! the rapture and the joy, that JESUS, by inheritance hath obtained a more excellent name than angels; and that his people, his fellows, by their union with him, and their right in him, are begotten to the same heritage, and will enter into the joy of their LORD. Oh! that God the SPIRIT, who in grace and love, hath brought the Church acquainted with these precious things, may daily, by his quickening, and renewing influences, anoint all the fellows of CHRIST, with the same oil of gladness, as their glorious Head. And while our God and FATHER saith unto his dear SON, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; all his adopted children may know their oneness and interest in CHRIST, and in that kingdom, which cannot fail!

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is prosecuting the same blissful Subject in this Chapter as in the former, in speaking of the Glories of CHRIST. His Love to the Church, in taking our Nature: and the Blessedness it brings to all his People.

THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The opening of this Chapter, is an inference from the close of the former. The Apostle having said such blessed things, in shewing the vast superiority of the Gospel dispensation, to all revelations which went before; reminds the Church, how important it must be, to have these things always in remembrance. And, as our memories are so treacherous, to be the more earnest to seek for grace, that we might not forget them. Reader! here is one of the sweet offices of God the HOLY GHOST, particularly endeared to us. You, and I, are forgetful of divine things. JESUS saith, that the HOLY GHOST *shall bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever he himself hath said unto us.* John xiv. 26. And shall not you and I look up to that gracious, and loving Teacher, and say, LORD! be thou the Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS; that none of his precious words, and the glorious things belonging to his Almighty Person, and offices, may at any time slip from our minds?

Paul adds a striking argument for this attention. If the law given by the ministry of angels, formed a subject of such high concern, that the least breach of it, produced punishment; what must the neglect of such great salvation bring forth, which the SON of GOD himself hath brought? The manner in which the question is here put, proves that it is impossible to escape. And indeed, when we consider, not only the greatness of the salvation itself, but the Almightyness of Him by whom it is wrought; every one who hears of it, must stand convicted, in his own conscience, that the neglect of it, cannot fail to produce the inevitable consequences, of everlasting condemnation. It is impossible to escape. Reader! pause one moment over the solemn consideration. The love, wisdom, and power, of all the Persons of the GODHEAD, have been manifested, in the contrivance of this salvation. The mysterious nature of that Almighty Being, who hath brought it; the greatness of his labor, sufferings, agonies, blood-shedding, and death, by means of which alone it could be accomplished: the infinite preciousness of the thing itself, and the everlasting consequences involved in it; all carry the fullest conviction with them, how impossible it must be, in any to escape, who slight, or despise such great salvation!

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that* is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

I will not detain the Reader with all the observations that might be made on these verses; for this would lead too far, in a work of this kind. A few of the more prominent points, are all I shall here offer. And *first*. What the Apostle saith, of One in a certain place testifying of man; doth not refer to the first man *Adam*, or to mankind in general; but specially, and personally, to some identical one, and which is evidently *CHRIST*. It is a quotation from the viiith Psalm. *JESUS* himself hath very plainly made application of it to himself: *Matt. xxi. 16.* And the words are expressive of the astonishment the child of God finds, when truly regenerated by the *HOLY GHOST*, of the infinite condescension of *JEHOVAH*, by a means so wonderful as the incarnation of the *SON OF GOD*, accomplishing redemption.

Secondly. The making him a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death; and yet, at the same time, putting all things, both men, and angels, and devils; yea, the whole creation, both visible, and invisible, under his feet; so that there is nothing left, but what is under the subjection of *CHRIST*: these are points, which arrest the mind, and call forth both the astonishment, love, and praise, of all the Church of *GOD*!

Thirdly. *CHRIST* is said to have *tasted death for every man*. The phrase is an expression to intimate knowledge of death. It is a figure borrowed from the common circumstances of mankind, such as when, in order to ascertain what a thing is, and to have a personal

knowledge of it, we taste it. Such was the case here, in allusion to CHRIST's death. *By the grace of God he tasted it*; that is, he endured it. When it is added, *for every man*, it is not to be supposed, that his death was intended a ransom for every individual of the human race; but for every one of his brethren, *the heirs of salvation*, as they are called: Chap. i. 14. And the following verses, of *the many sons* he is to bring to glory; the persons whom *he is not ashamed to call brethren*; and the *children whom God hath given him*: these terms very plainly define, and mark the characters of those, for whom CHRIST tasted death.

Fourthly. The necessity of CHRIST's death, in being made perfect through sufferings, is also very blessedly expressed. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things*, so to be perfected. And this sweet Scripture, is in exact correspondence to the whole testimony of the written word. For He that is heir of all things, is heir also of death. He is *the first born from the dead*; *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*. Colossians i. 18. Rev. i. 5.

Fifthly. The openness of nature, between CHRIST and his people, is also most blessedly marked, in these verses. *Both he that sanctified, and they who are sanctified are all of one*. Yes! CHRIST is himself the whole, and sole sanctification of his people. They have no holiness, but what is derived from him. They were first chosen to be holy, and without blame in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. They are redeemed from all iniquity by Him, during the time-state of the Church. Ephes. i. 7. They are regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, and made new creatures in CHRIST JESUS, when born again. 2 Cor. v. 17. And CHRIST is made of God to them, during the whole of their time-state upon earth, until grace is finished in glory, and for ever; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. 1 Cor. i. 30. Hence those sweet scriptures which follow, in those verses, and are confirmed throughout the whole word of God. Psm. xxii. 22. Psm. xviii. 2. Isaiah viii. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

I beg the Reader's attention to this scripture, with that earnestness its great importance demands; for it is most blessed. *First*: let it be well noticed, the reason here assigned, for the SON of God taking upon him the nature of man; namely, because the children whom the FATHER had given him, were partakers of flesh and blood. To be sure, JESUS would take part of the same; for how else could he be married to his Church? Had he taken any other nature but the nature of man, what union could there have been between them? And I beg

the Reader to notice also, how decided a proof those expressions, of CHRIST's children being partakers of flesh and blood, on whose account he took the same, is hereby given, both of CHRIST's pre-existence as Head, and Husband of his Church, set up from everlasting; and his own eternal power and GODHEAD, in that it is said, he himself likewise took part of the same. This action of CHRIST, and this cause, in the SON of GOD taking flesh and blood, are unanswerable evidences, in proof of his GODHEAD. And the Reader may do well, in the present sinful, CHRIST-despising generation, to remark them as he goes. See Luke i. 38. and Commentary.

Secondly. Let it be observed also, another motive here spoken of, for which the SON of GOD took part of the same flesh and blood as his children; namely, that *through death he might destroy him which had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage.* What a glorious account is here? But how came the devil to have the power of death? And by what means were the children of GOD, his captives, to be in such bondage? The scriptures give most satisfactory answers to these questions: and which serve, at the same time, to prove the liberty, whereby the LORD JESUS hath made his children free; and to enhance the preciousness of the LORD JESUS himself for his grace.

The Devil, by seducing our nature, in the *Adam-fall* transgression, not only brought in death; but universal captivity. *Sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Rom. v. 12. And hence, the devil may be truly said, in this sense to have the power of death: yea, and lawfully too. For, so the scripture confirms it. *For of whom a man is overcome: of the same is he brought into bondage.* 2 Pet. ii. 19. And hence, though CHRIST by his death, hath overcome death; and destroyed him that had the power of death; yet we find many of GOD's dear children are still subject to bondage, in the fear of death; yea, many of them also, who are convinced of their redemption by CHRIST, and their interest in CHRIST. This *fruit of Adam's sin*, they taste in bondage fears; though they triumph in CHRIST, by his great deliverance from the *curse* of it. Reader! pause over the subject. What hath thy GOD, thy SAVIOR, by JESUS wrought! Oh! see to it, if thou knowest the blessedness of this sweet scripture, and believeth the record that GOD hath given of his dear SON; that no unsuitable, unbecoming fears of death arise in the mind, when CHRIST hath taken flesh and blood, on purpose to destroy both him that had the power of death, and death itself; and which he hath most effectually done; and to deliver his redeemed, from being all their life time, through fear of a shadow, subject to bondage. Psm. xxiii. 4.

One word more on this precious scripture. There can be no doubt, but that as by sin we were all *lawful* captives to Satan; it must be a *lawful* act alone, that can make us free, from that captivity. This the SON of GOD accomplished, by destroying Satan, and delivering his people. And so GOD the FATHER engaged for, in Covenant promises. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful (mark the word lawful) captive delivered? But thus saith the LORD: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the ter-*

rible delivered; for I will contend with him, that contendeth with thee; and I will save thy children. Isaiah xlix. 24, 25. Oh! what a scripture is here! How full in point! How unanswerable in Covenant promises! Oh! the love of God our FATHER to our glorious Head, and to the Church in him!

Reader! again I say, do not turn away from the precious view, (for it is most precious,) which ariseth out of this blessed scripture, of the Son of God taking flesh and blood for such gracious purposes, because his children were partakers of the same. JESUS hath, in our nature, conquered him which first conquered us. And JESUS hath conquered both death and him, that had the power of death, by his own death; and by his rising to life again, hath opened to us everlasting life. Yea JESUS hath done more. He hath conquered the devil *in us*, by regeneration; and hath taken the strong man armed which kept us in bondage, and spoiled his armor. And JESUS hath overcome the devil *by us*, in every act of grace, by which, through the HOLY SPIRIT, we are enabled to *mortify the deeds of the body*; and when our Spirit *lusteth against the flesh*. Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 17. And that sweet promise, carries us on, with sure victory: *the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.* Rom. xvi. 20. Precious God and SAVIOR! adored be thy name for taking our nature upon thee! In due time thou wilt come to cast the devil, and all his hellish crew into the bottomless pit. And then thy Church shall see his fall, and rejoice over him for ever. Rev. 20 throughout.

16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him the seed of Abraham*.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining to God*, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

There is somewhat so very gracious in what is here said, of the Son of God, passing by the nature of Angels, and taking on him the seed of Abraham; that I would beg my Reader's indulgence to be somewhat more particular, in marking the distinguishing mercy. And in order that we may have the clearest apprehension of the subject, according to what is stated of it in scripture, it will not be amiss; first to make enquiry into the circumstances of that class of Beings, whose nature the Son of God passed by, when he took upon him the nature of man: before that we consider that class of Beings to whom JESUS manifested such distinguishing love in taking their nature. We have a large account of Angels, if taken altogether, in the word of God, to shew their high rank and dignity in the scale of being. They are evidently of the same family as man, considered as in CHRIST their head. Ephes. iii. 15. The elect Angels, so called,

1 Tim. v. 21, are spoken of, as deriving both their being, and well being from, and in, CHRIST. Coloss. i. 18. And as their Creator, they are commanded to worship him. Heb. i. 6. They ministered to his Person, upon earth, at his incarnation. Luke ii. 13. at his temptation, Matt. iv. 11. his agony in the garden, Luke xxii. 43. at the tomb, on his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 2, 7. his ascension, Acts i. 10, 11. and when the LORD shall come again to judge the world, they will attend him. Matt. xvi. 27. and the Church of his redeemed shall see the heavens open, and they shall behold them *ascending, and descending, upon the SON of Man*, John i. 51. Gen. xxviii. 12. But while these very blessed things are spoken of Angels, in proof of their high dignity and character, we are taught in this precious scripture; that the SON of GOD, *verily took not on him the nature of Angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham*. Let us humbly look into some of the causes, as far as holy scripture hath explained the subject, by way of marking the distinguishing mercy.

And *first*, to begin our enquiry of the scripture account of Angels. It appears, from several parts of the word of God, that there are Angels, which stand in a somewhat nearer relation to CHRIST, than that of being created by Him; for they are called, *Elect Angels*, 1 Tim. v. 21. by which it may reasonably be supposed, that some influence, or power, is manifested by CHRIST towards them, which differs wholly from what simply belongs to Creating, and Preserving them in Being with the whole Creation of God. For in this sense, Hell itself is preserved, and the fallen Angels, *which are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day*. Jude 6. But then, this influence, or power, of special grace and favor differs totally from that, which is shewn the elect of CHRIST among men. With those, there is an *union* with CHRIST and they form CHRIST's mystical body. He is the *head of his body the Church*. And they are *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*. Coloss. i. 18. Ephes. v. 30. Such things are never said of Angels. Moreover, CHRIST is the Redeemer of his elect men, which by nature in the Adam-fall, are all involved in ruin. But CHRIST is never said to be the Redeemer of Angels, in any part of the word of God. Indeed the Elect Angels needed not redemption, CHRIST hath kept them from falling. And for the fallen Angels, cast out of heaven, no Redeemer was ever to be provided, according to the Covenant of eternity. Hence we discover, the striking difference, respecting Angels and Men.

Secondly. It appears, however, from scripture, that as the Elect Angels, not only owe their Being, and their well Being to CHRIST; so are they in some special way, or manner, in the same family with Elect Men; and with them are Worshippers of CHRIST. When JЕ-ЮВАН bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith; *And let all the Angels of God worship him*. Heb. i. 6. And agreeably to this command, when John saw heaven open, and the Church praising CHRIST; he saith, that he heard also *the voice of many Angels round about the throne*, joining in the song. Rev. v. 11, 12. From hence we must infer, that the kingdom of CHRIST, is composed of Angels and Men; and that they are Worshippers together of CHRIST as God-Man Mediator. I might enlarge much on this point. But I

dare not: The limits of a *Poor Man's Commentary* will not admit. But when we consider, what the word of God relates on this subject; that *the Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation*; Heb. i. 14. that they evidently attend the assemblies of God's people; for women professing godliness are commanded to cover their heads in worship, *because of the Angels*; I Cor. xi. 10. and that they rejoice over the conversion of the Lord's people, when brought out of the *Adam-darkness*; these things seem somewhat to imply, that Elect Angels are of the same family, in point of service and worship, as Elect Men; only they are not united to CHRIST, and have not that relationship with JESUS, which we have, by his taking our nature upon him.

Thirdly. It should seem moreover probable, by what John saw in his vision, that though in point of intellect, Elect Angels being wholly spiritual, are higher than men; on which account perhaps it is said, that when at the resurrection the Church shall arise, a *spiritual* body, of that which was sown *natural*; we shall be like the Angels; Matt. xxii. 30. Yet, their knowledge of CHRIST, and his redemption-work, is not derived from the heavenly Court, but from the earthly Courts of our worship. It is said by the HOLY GHOST, in the Epistle to the Church at *Ephesus*, that it is *to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers* (meaning Angels) *might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God*. Ephes. iii. 10. From hence it should seem, that as the Elect Angels, which are ministering servants, and attend the assemblies of God's people; where CHRIST is proclaimed in his fulness and glory; they hear and learn: and hence they rejoice in beholding the conversion of sinners, which brings such glory to the Lord.

But I pause. I shall pursue this part of the subject no further. It is no doubt, a pleasing consideration to regard, what the scripture hath said, concerning the Elect Angels. And it is pleasing also, to consider them, as in this way connected into one family of worship, in the adoration of CHRIST with ourselves. And I can conceive, that the consciousness of their presence, in our assemblies of worship, though invisible to us, would occasion, if properly considered, no small solemnity, and not unfrequently holy joy. Yea, such a thought, under grace, might be productive of much good, if we sometimes considered, with what compassion they must behold heirs of God, and joint heirs with CHRIST, when they observe us cold, and too often inattentive in the great concerns of salvation! But I add no more.

It is time to attend to the account of CHRIST's regard to us before Angels. Though so much may be said of Angels; and is said of them; yet we are here told, concerning JESUS, that *verily he took not on him the nature of Angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham*. This is our mercy. This, our highest dignity, and honor. And the HOLY GHOST blessedly assigns the causes.

And, *first*. It is the human nature, not the angelic, CHRIST betrothed to himself. Before the foundation of the world, the Church was chosen in him. JESUS was set up from everlasting, as the Head and Husband of his people: and then he himself saith, *his delights were with the sons of men*. Ephes. i. 4. Psm. viii. 25—31.

Secondly. It was the Elect Church, and not the Elect Angels, which became ruined by the fall. Consequently the nature he had to redeem, that nature he took. To have taken the nature of Angels to redeem the nature of Man, would have been unsuitable and improper. Hence, as by one *man sin entered into the world, and death by sin*: by one man, came also *justification to life*. Rom. v. throughout. An Angel's nature could not have corresponded to purposes of this kind.

Thirdly. A deliverance from the condemnation of the broken law of God, required a sacrifice. *For without shedding of blood, there is no remission*. Heb. ix. 22. But had CHRIST taken an Angel's nature, he could have made no offering for sin. Redemption could only be effected, by *the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all*; whereby *he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Heb. x. 1—14.

Fourthly. It was a law in Israel, that no man, who was a stranger in the land, should be king over the people. *Thou shalt in any wise set him to be king over thee, who is one of thy kindred*. Deut. xvii. 15. To whom then, did the right of government belong, but to JESUS? Here was indeed One born for it; to whom all his Mother's children might bend before. Gen. xlix. 8. Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

And, *lastly*, to mention no more. The HOLY GHOST here saith, that *in all things*, it behoved CHRIST to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful, and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God. So then, this union of nature, this blessed compound of God and Man in one Person, was that only, which could answer the vast purposes of JEHOVAH, in the work of redemption. It may be said, indeed, that as God, he could not acquire either a greater knowledge of our wants, in taking upon him our nature; or a greater disposition to mercy towards us, by this union. But it must be said also, at the same time, that if it added not to his knowledge, or his disposition to mercy; yet it gave him a more perfect personal apprehension of them, in a knowledge by fellow feeling, how they acted upon our nature; and how the relief from them might best affect us. Besides, by taking the nature of man, he taught man how to come to him, under exercises. *Ye know the heart of a stranger*, (said the LORD,) *for ye were strangers*. So I can tell JESUS. He knoweth *our* frame by his *own*. Had he taken the nature of Angels, of what use would it have been, to have said to JESUS, he knoweth the nature of Angels, what consolation would this have been to flesh and blood? Oh! precious JESUS! never, never, let me lose sight of this sweet scripture, with all the blessed encouragements arising out of it: my God, my JESUS, took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him, the seed of Abraham, that he might be a merciful, and faithful high Priest to God!

REFLECTIONS.

Oh! for grace to take heed to those things, which I have heard of God's covenant love and salvation; that, through the sweet office of God the HOLY GHOST, as the Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS, I

may never let them slip. And do thou blessed LORD, put such an holy jealousy and fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee, nor neglect so great salvation.

Praises to my gracious GOD and SAVIOR! who in his great condescension for the sufferings of death, was made a little lower than the Angels; and yet was then, and is now, and eternally must be, the LORD both of Angels and Men. And oh! what a thought! He who is the High and Lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, is also in the same moment, in his human nature, one with his people. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. And is it so, (oh! thou blessed LORD,) that thou art not ashamed to call thy people brethren? LORD! grant that I may never feel that false pride, and be ashamed to call thee so! Surely I will tell all the world, whose I am, and whom I serve; and say to all I meet, JESUS is not ashamed to call me brother. And shall I not say to thee with delight, and joy, in the language of thy Church of old: *Oh! that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother: when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.*

Reader! do you know the LORD? If so, think of your mercies, and rightly make use of them; amidst the present sinful and adulterous CHRIST-despising generation! Will you be cast down, because of the temptation, and have your soul discouraged by reason of the way? Oh! blessed be the way, however tempted it may be, if it thereby leads the soul, more frequently, more closely, to JESUS. Darkness is a mercy, if it drives me to JESUS the light. Poverty of soul is true riches, if my pinchings endear his enlargements! It is blessed to know, and blessed to feel, all spiritual wants; to make the soul more sensible, that there is no fulness but in JESUS. LORD the SPIRIT! cause my soul then to live upon CHRIST!

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The HOLY GHOST is here still preaching CHRIST. The LORD, the SPIRIT, calls upon the Church, to pause, and contemplate, the Person of JESUS. He draws a Comparison between CHRIST and Moses. He shews the awful State of Unbelief!

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and high Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house is builded by some *man* ; but he that built all things is God.

5 And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after ;

6 But Christ as a son over his own house ; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Who, but must admire, the very beautiful method, in which the Apostle opens this Chapter ! Having in those two which are preceding, drawn out, in the most animated manner, to view, the Person of the Son of God ; both in his divine nature, and in his human ; and in the mysterious union of both ; he now stands and calls upon the Church to behold and consider him ! And what a glorious sight would it be, had we our spiritual senses, and the organs of vision so quickened and enlarged, as to form suitable apprehensions, of his infinite dignity and greatness ? I would beg the Reader's attention, to the very great beauty, contained in these few verses on this subject, both as it relates to the persons called upon to behold CHRIST ; and CHRIST himself.

And first, let him remark of the *persons* called upon. They are said to be, *holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling*. By which, as I have uniformly all the way along observed, in all the Apostle's writings, is meant, the *Church*, as distinguished from the carnal world. *Holy brethren* : by virtue of their oneness with CHRIST, being holy in CHRIST. Originally, and eternally, chosen by God the FATHER in CHRIST, to be *holy, and without blame before him in love*. And predestinated, to the *adoption of children* for this purpose. And willed by the same LORD, to this holiness, as the final end of their creation in CHRIST. *Be ye holy, for I am holy*. And hence, by regeneration, made so, in CHRIST. And *brethren* ; not only of each other, but of CHRIST their elder brother ; being chosen in the same eternal purpose of God ; and formed in the same Womb of eternity. Hence, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren.

And they are all *partakers of the heavenly calling*. For they are alike said to be *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Hence, from everlasting having been set apart in the grace union, with their glorious Head and Husband, they partake, in all the communicable grace, which flows from Jesus, to his members here ; and in all that is communicable of glory from him, in the life to come. Now, it is to such, Paul calls to the contemplation of their adorable LORD JESUS CHRIST. And indeed it is such, and such only, that can take pleasure and find interest in the view. For to a carnal mind, there is no beauty to desire him : while to the faithful, and believing, regenerated by grace, he is *the altogether lovely, and the fairest among ten thousand* !

Let the Reader next look to CHRIST, and consider, while obeying the Apostle's call to behold CHRIST, the very gracious characters

which *Paul* here particularly holds forth for the contemplation of his redeemed to view him under. *First*, the *Apostle*; and next with it, *the high Priest of our profession*. These he singles out, amongst numberless other most lovely, and engaging characters, as being more immediately suited to the subject, he had them before him. Reader! do not fail to mark them. If *JESUS* be dear to you, as your high Priest: (and how would a throne of grace be accessible or blessed without him,) surely to behold *CHRIST* in this office, as sent and authorised, as the Almighty Apostle from *GOD*, must endear him, and make him so. Here indeed lies the vast stress, of the whole blessedness of the gospel. *CHRIST* is the great high Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice; in whom alone, and by whom alone, all our approaches to the throne are made. But it is *JEHOVAH's* authority, which gives efficacy to all. *CHRIST* is the great Apostle come from *GOD*; and faith's great warrant to come to *GOD* by him. And the child of *GOD*, taught of *GOD* the *SPIRIT*, these precious, distinct, and at the same time, united views; finds all the encouragement to give him an holy boldness. For the poor sinner, that thus comes to *GOD*, in, and by *CHRIST*; comes to *GOD*, in *GOD's* own way. This is the remedy of *GOD's* own providing. And therefore it can never fail. It is, as if a child of *GOD* should say; how can I fear, how can I doubt of acceptance with *GOD*, as long as I come to *GOD*, in this new and living way of *GOD's* Apostle, and high Priest? *CHRIST's* blood and righteousness my offering; and *GOD's* own appointment for my pleading? Oh! that all the holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, may daily hear, the command of *GOD* the *HOLY GHOST*, by his servant the Apostle, in this sweet scripture; and feel the blessed influence of the *SPIRIT*, at the same time in their hearts; and consider *the Apostle and High Priest of our profession* *CHRIST JESUS*!

I beg the Reader next to notice, the beautiful method, which *GOD* the *HOLY GHOST* adopts, in order to glorify the *LORD JESUS*. Indeed, it is a grand feature this, in the *SPIRIT's* teaching. He began this Epistle, with shewing the vast superiority of the *LORD JESUS CHRIST* to Angels; declaring that he was not only Him, by whom *JEHOVAH* made the worlds; but that when *JEHOVAH* brought him in, as the first begotten into the world, he commanded *all the Angels of GOD* to worship him. Chap. i. 2—6. And here, while writing again to the *Hebrews*, and knowing their attachment to their great minister *Moses*, the Apostle introduceth *Moses* to their view, by way of manifesting, that *Moses*, though such a Prophet as never before arose in Israel, whom the *LORD* knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders, which the *LORD* sent him to do; yet, compared to *CHRIST*, was no more than a servant to a Son. Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11. And to confirm it, if possible, yet more, under the similitude of an house, and builder, the Apostle states that *Moses*, as a creature, or as an house which could not make or build itself, was but as both in the *LORD's* hand. Now he that built all things (*and all things were made by CHRIST, and without Him, was not any thing made, that was made: John i. 3.*) is, and must be, *GOD*: and consequently *CHRIST* is *GOD*. Reader! what can be more decisive, in confirmation of the true, and proper *GODHEAD* of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*.

Neither, according to my apprehension of things, was it without an eye to the firm establishment of this glorious truth, of the GOD-HEAD of CHRIST, in the mind of the Church at this place; that the HOLY GHOST, thus guided *Paul* to write, because the LORD was about to speak so much, as he hath done, of the true, and proper manhood of CHRIST also. For the LORD the SPIRIT is here opening to the Church's view, CHRIST's faithfulness in his office, of the priesthood. *For this man*, (saith the LORD,) *was faithful to him that appointed him*, and consequently *counted worthy of more glory than Moses*. Certainly, when the SON of GOD stood up at the call of his FATHER, as the Head and Husband, and Sponsor, and Surety of his Church; he became in her law-room, and stead, the servant of JEHOVAH; and as such, faithfulness became him and his house for ever! And what can be more blessed to the Church, than the consciousness and assurance of CHRIST, as GOD-Man Mediator, being a faithful High Priest to GOD and Man; and acting in that high capacity, in all he did for his Church, his house, *whose house are we?*

I detain the Reader, over what is here said, (and repeated with some little variation in verse 14,) to observe, that when it is added, *whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end*: this is not said, as if our being CHRIST's house, was made, in the least, conditional, or in any way depended upon somewhat to be done, or held fast by us. If it were, indeed, it would reduce the house of CHRIST itself to a peradventure; and make the whole of GOD's grace to rest upon the will of man. If the Reader will notice the words, a little more closely, he will discover, through divine teaching, that it is our *confidence*, and our *rejoicing* which we are said to hold fast, and not our interest in CHRIST, if we would know for our joy, that we are CHRIST's house. My happiness, and my enjoyment of my interest in CHRIST, will indeed be more or less, as, through grace, I find strength, to hold fast my confidence in CHRIST. But my safety in CHRIST, is in the LORD's holding *me* fast; and not *I* him. Men, who read their Bibles, untaught of GOD the SPIRIT, may fancy that such *ifs* and *buts* as they meet with here and there, are put for conditions and causes. But certainly not so. Here are no such things. CHRIST's house, is of GOD the FATHER's laying in CHRIST himself, the sure foundation in Zion. And all his members are living stones, built up by GOD himself in this house, for *an holy temple to the LORD, and an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT*. Isaiah xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Ephes. ii. 20—22.

Reader! I beseech you, as you value your privileges, and high calling in CHRIST; learn of GOD the SPIRIT how to estimate your safety in CHRIST. So wretchedly low at present is the tide of things, in the spiritual life of GOD in the soul, according to modern profession, of what some men call the Gospel; that in this land, where once it stood at high water mark, it is now nearly gone out, and left our shore at the lowest ebb. They do not live upon CHRIST, but upon their own self attainments. And while any thing in self, can be found to satisfy their minds, they are at ease; though they have no communication, from the ocean of CHRIST, in those streams, which alone can truly *make glad the city of GOD*. Psm. xlv. 4.

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end:

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

I pause the more frequent over those verses, where GOD the HOLY GHOST is spoken of, in any of his more express *personal* acts, in order to direct the Reader's attention to the subject. Among the latter-day heresies, the denial of his Person and GODHEAD, is specially marked. And the Reader will do well to consider, how very often the LORD hath ascribed to himself personal exercises; such as

speaking and commanding, and the like, as if to guard the Church against this deadly sin. Surely the thing itself, being so plain, as all the ministry of the HOLY GHOST must imply; it need not have been said as here; *Wherefore as the HOLY GHOST saith*; unless it had been intended in a more palpable way, and manner, to keep the minds of the faithful always alive, in their attention, both to his Person, and GODHEAD. See Chap. ix. 8. and Commentary.

Concerning what is here said, by GOD the HOLY GHOST, in charging the people, to be on the watch, lest an evil heart of unbelief should creep in among them; (and he holds up before them the history of those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, by way of remark, I shall beg to offer a few brief observations.

And, first. Let the Reader take notice, to whom these words are spoken, namely, to the *brethren*. Not to the carnal and unregenerate; but to those of whom it is said, verse 14, for *we are made partakers of CHRIST*; or, as it might have been rendered, for *we have been made partakers of CHRIST*; for it refers to an act past: and an act made on God's part; not on ours: having been so made, *before the foundation of the world*. Ephes. i. 4, 5. Let the Reader make this his first observation on the passage. It is to the Church, the brethren, to whom the HOLY GHOST speaks.

Secondly. They are admonished to take heed against an hardness of heart, and an evil heart of unbelief. Now this is not the original stony heart, which the Church, as well as the whole *Adam-race*, have by nature. For the LORD promised to take this away: and in regeneration it is actually taken away. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. with John iii. 3—8. But it is that hardness of heart, which even the LORD's people, in the unrenewed part of their nature, their body of sin which they carry about with them, are too apt to imbibe, from mingling with carnal company, and an absence from ordinances, neglect in reading the word of GOD: and a shyness, or little frequency at the mercy seat. These things bring on coldness, and distance, between CHRIST and the soul: and like the Church, a sleepy, slothful frame, is felt. Song v. 2. and Commentary.

Thirdly. The LORD plainly shews in what follows, by calling upon the Church *to exhort one another*, that it is the Church, and not the carnal which is here admonished; and by the remedy proposed by exhortation, it is as plain, that absence from the LORD, and his courts, and inattention to the several means of grace, were referred to, as the causes of inducing this hardness, and insensibility of heart, and unbelief.

Fourthly. The carcasses of those which fell in the wilderness, plainly shew, that they differed wholly from the LORD's people, here admonished. They are so spoken of elsewhere, as those *with whom GOD was not well pleased*. 1 Cor. x. 5. And who were they? Not the LORD's people in CHRIST, who from everlasting *are chosen in him*; predestinated to the adoption of children by JESUS CHRIST to himself; and *accepted in the beloved*. Ephes. i. 4, 5, 6. Who are they then. I answer, the children of Israel, *after the flesh*: or perhaps also partly that mixed multitude, which went up out of Egypt with *Moses*. See Exod. xii. 37, 38. and Numb. xiv. 26—37. Those men, while the miracles of the LORD's servant in *Egypt*, were warm

in their remembrance, followed *Israel*, but they knew not the LORD; neither followed the LORD. Hence the expressions. *For some, howbeit not all.* See Reader! distinguishing grace! And do not forget, what GOD the SPIRIT hath also said, on the same subject. *For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac, shall thy seed be called.* Rom. ix. 6, 7. The nation of Israel, as a nation, like any other nation where there is a professing Church, as a professing Church, did all enjoy the outward privileges. They had all the *Manna*, and all drank of the *Rock*; the *Cloud* to screen by day, and the *pillar of fire* by night. But these were only common things to them like Ordinances. Unbelief *then*, and unregeneration *now*, produce the same effect. The five words of CHRIST, *Ye must be born again*: John iii. 7. becomes the sole qualification to an entrance into CHRIST's kingdom.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, and cheerfully obey, the LORD the SPIRIT, and consider, as thou art commanded and hast such abundant reason to do; consider, the Apostle and High Priest of thy profession CHRIST JESUS! Yes! thou glorious GOD and SAVIOR! I would desire to contemplate thy Person, character, offices, and relations! I would desire grace, and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of thee, to behold thee in all that concerns thy Mediatorial glory, in thy faithfulness to thy FATHER, and to thy people. I would gaze on thee, until my whole soul was swallowed up in the contemplation; and until that I found myself one with my LORD in that house, over which, as his own, CHRIST is the rightful owner; and which house, is CHRIST's body the Church, and He *the fulness which filleth all in all*.

And do thou, Almighty GOD the HOLY GHOST, give me continual grace, to keep in remembrance thy precious exhortation to thy people. LORD! let nothing of sin cleave to my poor fallen nature; neither suffer me to be at any time hardened with the deceitfulness of it. Oh! the long suffering of my GOD, to the forty years provocation of the people in the wilderness! Oh! the numberless years of the LORD's long suffering now! Cause me, O LORD, to mark that grace which kept back thy people from murmuring *then*, when the LORD brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* by *Moses*; that though *some*, (even the *Israel* after the flesh,) when they had heard, did provoke; yet not *all*, (even those whom grace restrained.) They fell not after the same example of unbelief. And cause me, O LORD, to know *now*, that it is grace, and grace alone, by which any are kept *by the power of God through faith unto salvation*. Do thou, O LORD the HOLY GHOST! who here so sweetly holds forth our great and glorious Apostle, and High Priest, JESUS CHRIST, to thy Church's view, give grace to the apprehension and knowledge of Him; that through thy blessed influences thy people may all rejoice in him, to the praise of the glory of His grace, *who hath made us accepted in the Beloved*.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

The same precious Subject is continued through this whole Chapter. The LORD's People are here shewn, that CHRIST is their Rest. CHRIST having passed into the Heavens, is made an unanswerable Argument, to come unto him boldly.

LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.

7 (Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.)

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that

rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

The opening of this Chapter is so immediately connected with the close of the former, that it becomes the very inference of it. *Let us therefore fear*, saith the Apostle, while beholding the awful carcasses of unbelievers, as from such distinguishing grace as we have received, in being given to believe in God for salvation, we have abundant reason to *rejoice with trembling*. Psm. ii. 11. The fear here spoken of, cannot mean a fear of coming short of CHRIST; for the Apostle had before said, *we are made partakers of CHRIST*; and *we are his house*. Neither are we called upon to the exercise of *bondage fear*, while conscious of having received a *spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry *Abba FATHER*. Rom. viii. 15. Neither can the *seeming* to come short of it, mean the seeming so to a believer's *own soul*; for it is expressly added, (ver. 3.) *For we which have believed do enter into rest*. A plain proof, that the child of GOD, resting on CHRIST, could not doubt his interest in CHRIST. But what then is to be supposed the fear here recommended, and to be sought after? Certainly that holy, jealous, child-like fear, which an obedient son wishes to have always before him, not to do or say any thing towards a kind father, which might grieve him. Such as is inculcated towards the HOLY SPIRIT. Ephes. iv. 30. And the Apostle beautifully illustrates the subject, by a case in point. The Gospel was preached in the old Church, in type, and figure, as it is now in substance, and reality, in the New. But there were then hearers who never felt the power of it, as there are now; and, consequently, to both alike, it is unprofitable. But the mark is decisive, where *faith cometh by hearing*. A child of God regenerated, heareth to the salvation of the soul. The unawakened doth not. And the LORD JESUS himself sets this down, as the sure, unerring testimony, in his account, to the carnal Jews. *He that is of God, (saith CHRIST,) heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*. John viii. 47.

I admire the very beautiful manner of expression, made use of in these verses, in allusion to the LORD's resting, after the works of creation. *And God did rest the seventh day from all his works*. What rest? Not in a way of taking repose, as (speaking after the manner of men) we are said to do, when tired, and our work is over. But the calling into being of creatures, then ceased; and God rested from it, in a way of creation, when the whole which the LORD ordained to bring forth into life, was made. It is in this sense, the expression plainly means. And the same is meant of the personal work of CHRIST, as CHRIST. *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his*. Yes! For when JESUS had *by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*. Chap. i. 3. Herein CHRIST, as our High Priest, differed from all other priests, who always *stood* ministering. And so far from ceasing, their offerings were daily. CHRIST's but once, and that in effect for ever. Oh! the preciousness of CHRIST! And true believers also, when ceasing from seeking justification, either in whole, or in part, from any, or all the works of

their own; but count themselves, and every thing in themselves, filthy, and unclean; hanging upon CHRIST only, as the vessel upon the nail in a sure place: such may be said, as indeed was said before, (verse 3.) to rest on CHRIST, and enter by faith upon the enjoyment of it.

It may not be improper to observe, on what is said of JESUS, not having given the people rest, that it doth not mean the LORD JESUS CHRIST, but *Joshua*, the son of *Nun*, who succeeded *Moses* in the ministry of the Church. See *Joshua* i. 1. The name *Joshua*, is the same in the Hebrew language, as JESUS; and signifies SAVIOR. But though *Joshua* did bring the people into *Canaan*, yet this was only typical of a better rest, *which remaineth for the people of God*. Hence it is plain, by the LORD's speaking of another rest, this of *Joshua's* was not the one intended. CHRIST himself is indeed *the rest wherewith the LORD causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing*. *Isaiah* xxviii. 12. Reader! it will be your happiness, and mine, if, under divine teaching, we are come to CHRIST, as our rest; and from a knowledge of Him, are made sensible of his bountiful dealing with us, in the rest of salvation. *Matt.* xi. 28, &c. *Psm.* cxvi. 7.

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The WORD of God is here evidently intended to mean, the uncreated WORD, of which *John* speaks in his Gospel. *John* i. 1. And let the Reader pause, and observe, what is here said of CHRIST's glory on this ground. His eyes, like a flame of fire, penetrates through all coverings. He is the Almighty *Zephnath-paaneah*, the great Revealer of secrets. What a folly to think that any thing can escape his observation? What an unanswerable proof of his GOD-HEAD?

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne

of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

I include these verses within one reading, because they are so interwoven, that it were a pity to consider them distinctly, for they form one beautiful whole. And yet, they open to so many volumes of subject, that a whole life of grace can never go over the several parts of them, so as to say, there is no more to be said upon them. In a *Poor Man's Commentary* I must study shortness, and therefore can only glance at the outlines.

And, *first*. We are called upon to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth; and here we are said to behold, with full confidence, our great High Priest, as passed into the heavens, JESUS the SON of GOD. I admire the manner in which this blessed truth is spoken. *Seeing then*, saith the Apostle; as if (and which is in reality the case,) all dispute about it was done away. There is a special emphasis on the words, *seeing then*. *He is gone into heaven*, (saith Peter). There CHRIST our forerunner, is entered. *And is on the right hand of God: angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him.* 1 Pet. iii. 22. And I admire the Apostle's joining to this account of CHRIST's return to heaven, both the office of CHRIST, and the name of CHRIST. He had before, in the second Chapter, spoken somewhat largely of CHRIST, as a Priest, and an High Priest; and here he calls him a *great* High Priest. And, as the Apostle delighted upon all occasions, to introduce the name of his LORD, whenever an opportunity offered, he adds to the account of our great High Priest having passed into the heavens; his name, JESUS the SON of GOD! Reader! note this down first, in your looking to Him, who is thus passed into the heavens. It is JESUS, God's dear SON, and your dear High Priest; yea, your great High Priest!

Secondly, Paul herefrom, draws the strongest of all arguments, that we should *hold fast our profession*. Not as if this depended upon any strength in ourselves to hold it; but, that in CHRIST's strength we should grasp it, and carry it about with us as the credentials of our faith, rather parting with life than with a belief in CHRIST. Isa. xxvii. 5. And this holding fast, implies making use of CHRIST upon all occasions; continually acting faith upon him; depending in him; and in spite of all temptations, resolutely holding on, and holding out, as those, who in a consciousness that He who is our great High Priest is passed into the heavens, hath obtained eternal redemption for us, by his blood and righteousness, and is now returned to heaven, to see the merit of it recompensed in some measure and degree, (though fully it never can be through all eternity,) to all his people. This is our profession. And the consciousness of CHRIST being passed into the heavens, is enough in itself to make all his people, in spite of hell and sin, to hold it fast.

Thirdly. But the next persuasion from these precious words, riseth still higher. *For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* Of all the consolations and encouragements, under the trials of the faithful, these views of JESUS, are certainly the greatest, and the best. *First*, as they relate to CHRIST's Person. And, *Secondly*, as they relate to his High Priestly Office.

Reader! what a thought is it, to lead the child of God to the mercy-seat of God in CHRIST, with every comfortable assurance of success, when we consider who it is we go to, what a knowledge he hath of our persons, wants, circumstances, trials, and difficulties; what a personal experience he himself hath had of the same things, being when upon earth *in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*. In all things else the same.

It is possible I may be singular. But, if I am, I can truly say I find the blessedness of it; and would not think otherwise than I do, on those sweet points, for a thousand worlds. I frequently say to myself, when my necessities compel me to go to the throne, (and, Reader, I fear, notwithstanding the frank and tender reception I always meet with there, when I go to my GOD and SAVIOR, I should seldom go there, did not my wants make me;) but I frequently say, was not JESUS made an High Priest purposely that He might be merciful? Was it not his deep love, and his deep affection to sinners, which made Him, of all others, the most fitted to be our High Priest? And will he not exercise it towards me? Doth not the very nature of an High Priest call for mercy? Would the office itself be needed, if there were not poor sinners to receive from it? It is most true, and it is most blessed in the truth, that JESUS is a great High Priest, and is passed into the heavens, in proof of his Almighty greatness, and his Almighty power; but what endears Jesus to my heart still more, is, that he is a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to GOD; and can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; in that, he himself was once encompassed with our infirmity, and was *in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*. Reader! is it not this which gives a lift to poor, tried, buffeted, tempted souls, and enables them to come *boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need?*

One word more. It is an additional argument, and the Apostle most blessedly blends it with the former; that not only CHRIST's greatness, and CHRIST's fellow-feeling and compassion, make him a suited High Priest for his people, and such as none other, but GOD and Man in one Person, can be; but also, that the exercises he himself hath gone through, and the sorrows in those exercises he hath borne, give him such a personal knowledge of all the cases and circumstances of his people, as nothing but the having trod the path himself could have brought him acquainted with. And, although it is most true, that as GOD he could have no additional knowledge, neither be more merciful, in taking upon him our nature; yet, had Jesus the SON of GOD not been man, as well as GOD, he could not have had human affections, and human feelings, in a personal experience of what human sorrows are. So that it doth tend to give yet further encouragement to go to JESUS, when we keep in remembrance, that he not only knows as GOD, but that he feels as man. And in his own breast, we have this sweet and affectionate advocate, in that *he knoweth our frame by his own, and how to administer the suited relief*.

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou, by the sweet influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, keep those views everlastingly alive in my heart; that my soul may have the most lively actings of faith, upon thy

Person, as God-Man, and thy knowledge, as having gone before in the tabulated path in my nature; so that I may not only come, but come boldly to thy mercy-seat, and always obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!

REFLECTIONS.

How shall I properly prize my mercies, in the grace the LORD gives me, to receive and believe in JESUS; when I am told, as in this Chapter, that the *professing Israel* of old, to whom the Gospel was preached, found no profit, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*. Oh! how plain and evident it is, from the experience of mankind in all ages, that grace makes all the difference between *him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not*. LORD! cause thy Church, thy people, thy redeemed, to rest in CHRIST and his finished work, as God in creation, and CHRIST in redemption, rested from theirs. Oh! the sweet thought! There is a rest, and CHRIST is that rest, *which remaineth for the people of God*.

Oh! thou uncreated WORD! let my soul be always under thy soul-warning, and spirit-comforting power. And, as all things are naked, and open to thine all-piercing sight, do thou, LORD, impart the very grace thou seest to be needful for me. Oh! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR! Thou art indeed passed into the heavens. Thither would my soul by faith and love follow thee. JESUS knoweth me, feebleth for me, is sensibly touched with the circumstances of my infirmities. Surely, JESUS can, and JESUS will, impart all necessary strength, and my God and SAVIOR, will make me more than conqueror, through his grace helping me!

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The same most precious Subject, as in the former Chapter, is carried on in this. Melchizedec is spoken of. Precious Views of CHRIST.

FOR every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining to God*, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was Aaron*.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

This is a very blessed Chapter. Every verse, more or less, is big with importance. It opens with shewing the nature and office of an High Priest. The very name implies somewhat of mediation. And, when considered with an eye to solemn transactions between God and Man, it is eminently so. The *first* feature described of his Person, who is an High Priest, is, that *he must be taken from among men*. He, that hath to mediate between God and men, must himself be a man, and not an angel; for an angel could not enter into the feelings of men; and therefore, could not be properly interested for those, in whose name he acted. *Secondly*, Not only must he be a man, who can, from his own feelings, judge how to act for man, and one of a nature like himself, but he must be able *to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*. *Gifts*, if needful, to obtain favor; and *sacrifices*, to do away the guilt of sin, in the way of God's appointment. I need not tell the Reader, that in all this, there is an allusion to the law. Indeed, all this is beautifully represented, as what the law required, and which was typical of CHRIST; in order to shew, how God the HOLY GHOST, under the gifts and sacrifices under the law, shadowed forth CHRIST; and how CHRIST, in the Gospel, hath fully become himself the whole substance of the law. If the Reader will turn to the law concerning gifts and sacrifices, he will discover how graciously the LORD the HOLY GHOST appointed those things in his Church, by way of preaching CHRIST in figure; until He, to whom the whole referred, came in Person, *to do away sin, by the sacrifice of himself*. Heb. ix. 26.

The priest, that was anointed to minister in holy things, was to form his judgment concerning sins done through ignorance by any of the people, and appoint a suitable sacrifice accordingly. The Reader will find a large account of this, Levit. iv. throughout, for both priest and people. And again, Numb. xv. 24—29. And, in like manner, concerning presumptuous sins. Levit. vi. and Numb. xv. 30. Now, upon all those occasions, the High Priest was supposed to enter into the feelings of the people, and to make, in some measure, their interest his own. So that none could be fit for an High Priest, but one taken from among men; and even among men, none but he who had a feeling heart, and who, from a consciousness that he himself was compassed with infirmities, *could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*. And, after all these qualifications, still no man had an authority to take the office of High Priest upon him, uncalled of God. Aaron was specially called of God. And so much so, that the daring presumption of Korah, and his company, who sought the priesthood, uncalled, was punished with an awful death. See Numb. xvi. 1—35. Reader! if such a tremendous judgment, under the law, followed the unhallowed attempt of men to minister in holy things before the LORD, what may be ultimately expected to follow those, who, under the Gospel, run unsent, uncalled, and not only rush, like the unthinking horse to the battle, into the sacred department of the ministry, but profess to

be moved by the HOLY GHOST, albeit every thing seems to speak concerning them, as in that Scripture: *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* Jer. xxiii. 21.

Reader! I need not, I should hope, call upon you to observe, what is in itself so very plain; that all that is here said, in these verses, concerning the High Priest, taken from among men, with those qualifications, and appointed of God, is here said, expressly to shew how CHRIST was taken from among men; how suited he was to such an office of mercy, and how fully authorized, and called of God to the appointment? But, Reader! though this was the evident intention of God the HOLY GHOST in this Scripture; and though, at first view, in reading what is here said of the great Jewish High Priest, *Aaron*; every child of God, who is taught of God, cannot but be immediately led, to contemplate the unequalled suitableness of our Almighty *Aaron*, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; as the One, and the only One, capable in all its departments to the performance of this high office: yet, I should be unpardonably remiss, in a work of this kind, to pass away from so interesting a subject, without first offering an observation or two upon it. The thoughts which arise out of it, are indeed very plain and striking; but they are not on that account the less beautiful and important. Let us look at a few of them.

And, *first*. As every High Priest was taken from among men, so the SON of GOD took upon him our nature for this express purpose, so that he also was taken from among men. For we are told, that *in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining unto God.* Heb. ii. 17. And hence, when, in the counsel of peace, between the Persons of the GODHEAD, the LORD JEHOVAH is represented in Scripture as speaking in vision to his HOLY ONE, these are the words which were spoken, *I have laid help upon ONE that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people.* Psm. lxxxix. 19. And as JESUS, our great High Priest, was taken from among men, so was he ordained for men. For there would have needed no High Priest, nor sacrifice, had there been no sinners. But, as CHRIST'S Church, CHRIST'S people, his spouse, whom he betrothed to himself before all worlds, had fallen into sin; the SON of GOD came to redeem her from all sin, by the sacrifice of himself. And, as God the FATHER, first gave her to his dear SON, so God the FATHER ordained CHRIST from among men, to be an High Priest, to act the part of an High Priest, to redeem her to himself, and *to present her to himself a glorious Church; not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but to be without blame before him in love.* Eph. v. 26, 27.

Secondly. As no man, among men, would have suited the office of an High Priest, according to what this blessed Chapter saith, but such as could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; so the great feature of character, in our dear LORD, to constitute him High Priest, was eminently his great meekness and tenderness of heart. God the FATHER'S account of him was this by the Prophet. Meek and lowly: Isa. xlii. 1—4. compared with Matt. ii. 23, 29. and Matt. xii. 17—21. And, although in point of holiness, CHRIST was *holy, harmless, and undefiled*: and, in point of power, *made higher than the heavens*: and, in point of understanding, *in him*

were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; yet, though all these were indeed requisites for the high office of the Priesthood, it was the infinite compassions of his heart, which made him so peculiarly suited for our High Priest, and more immediately hath endeared him to the affections of his people. Heb. vii. 26. Coloss. ii. 3. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

Thirdly. Our great High Priest, as in Person and qualifications, so in gifts and sacrifices, hath infinitely transcended all the offerings made by mere men. The priest taken from among men, who had a tender heart, and who, upon due consideration of the sinner's offence, when he came to him, knew how to distinguish, and to make an offering accordingly, between sins of ignorance, and sins of presumption, acted in a very suitable manner, as the law appointed, (see Levit. iv. and Numb. xvi.) but the gifts and offerings of JESUS, were *himself*, which not only included an all-sufficient ransom for all sins, both of omission and commission, but carried with it such an over-value, resulting from the dignity of his Person, and the preciousness of the offering, as can never be fully recompensed to the Church of God, to all eternity. Reader! think of this! Such is the efficacy of CHRIST's merits and sacrifice, that the remuneration to the LORD's body the Church, can never be made, so as to say, there is nothing more to be received, in a way of acknowledgment, to all eternity!

Fourthly. One very blessed view meets us in this subject, of a similarity in the cases of the Jewish High Priest, to that of our Almighty LORD, only here also, as in all other comparisons with an infinite superiority on the part of JESUS; I mean, in that it is said, the High Priest taken from among men, must have been one that could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way, in that *he himself also was compassed with infirmity*. Here opens a most precious view of JESUS. Though in himself he knew no sin, yet he personally knew all the sinless infirmities of our nature. Though none of our sins was put *in* him, yet the LORD laid *on* him the iniquities of all his people. Isa. liii. 6. Though, in himself, temptations had no power, yet, temptations, in all the varieties of being tempted, he knew; and was in all points tempted as we are. And, though *no guile was found in his mouth*, yet, surely, in the years he lived in our world, all the sin he beheld in his people, became so many wounds to his heart. If *the filthy conversation of the wicked vexed the soul of Lot day by day*; what must the holy JESUS have felt, when he *endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself*? 2 Pet. ii. 8. Heb. xii. 3. Reader! here again contemplate the suitableness of the LORD JESUS, in his High Priestly Office, for the boundless compassion of his heart, and for the compassion he must still feel for the ignorant of his people, and all their infirmities, seeing he himself was compassed with all of them; though in himself without sin, and liable to none of them in the possibility of error.

Fifthly. We must not overlook one feature more belonging to our LORD, as our great High Priest, to which the Jewish high priest could bear no comparison. I mean, that the interests of CHRIST are blended with the interests of the people. He that acted as an high priest in the Jewish church for men, and was taken from among

men, might have had, and no doubt he had being from the LORD's appointment, a feeling heart. But he could go no further. If he succeeded not when he had made his offering, he might indeed lament in secret, as holy men of old did, over the sins of the people. But, with our High Priest, there can be no failure. His Church is his body. Her concerns are his. The glory of CHRIST, is more than all the events to his people. That glory ensures his Church's interest. Hence, she must succeed in all her members. Jesus must see *of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. Isa. liii. 11. And, hence that blessed intercession of CHRIST, as our High Priest: FATHER! I will! *that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*. John xvii. 24.

Lastly: and as the crown of all. As no man presumed to act as an High Priest, in the Church of God, uncalled of God, so sweetly are we told, in this blessed Scripture, that CHRIST, though SON of God, and equal with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, in his divine nature, yet, when taking upon him our nature, glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but was called to it; yea, and sworn into it, (different from all other priests, Heb. vii. 21.) and consecrated in it, an High Priest for ever, in an unchangeable priesthood, after the order of *Melchizedec*! This is a grand point ever to be kept in view, in our remembrance of the priesthood of CHRIST. This gives validity and efficacy to all. Here is the warrant to faith to believe *the record which God gives of his dear Son*. Hence, every child of God, coming to the mercy-seat of God in CHRIST, finds confidence and boldness in the double view, that JEHOVAH's authority, and his name, is in CHRIST; and, therefore, in the efficacy of CHRIST's blood and righteousness, he cannot but meet with a most gracious reception. Heb. x. 19—23. Reader! I must not trespass any longer. The subject, indeed, is in itself endless. Oh! for grace to have it always in view! Jesus is my High Priest. He was, and is, and ever must be, One with the FATHER over all God blessed for ever, Amen. He was also, in his human nature, taken from among men. He can have compassion, yea, boundless compassion. Not simply by taking our nature only, but by having known that nature compassed with infirmities. And now in heaven he wears that nature still. And he cannot but recollect his former exercises, when on earth, and which hath everlastingly suited him, by past experiences, for sympathy, and fellow-feeling for his people here below. Precious High Priest of thy people! surely, all thy redeemed upon earth are as dear to thee, and as much watched over by thee, and loved and regarded by thee, as thy redeemed in heaven. Isaiah xxvii. 3.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*.

I will not detain the Reader with a long observation on what the HOLY GHOST hath here said, concerning the same authority which made CHRIST High Priest, which said also unto him, *Thou art my SON, to-day have I begotten thee*. To enter into the whole of this passage to the full, and follow it up with the remarks which arise out of the Scripture, would fill many pages. Let it in this place be sufficient to observe, that, in whatever sense the words be taken, they are most

highly expressive of the eternal nature and glory of the SON of GOD. They are a quotation from the second Psalm; where CHRIST, being set by JEHOVAH as King on his holy hill of Zion the Church; and having, as is represented by vision in the Revelations, been alone found *worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof*, (Rev. v. 1—10.) now, as King in Zion, declares the decree. And the first Chapter in this mysterious volume, which none but CHRIST could open, is the sovereign purpose of JEHOVAH, and addressed to CHRIST, as CHRIST, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. Reader! pause one moment, and remark the superior blessedness of all that GOD the FATHER saith to his dear SON, to every other declaration whatever. Very blessed it is to hear the LORD speaking in a way of grace to the Church. And very blessed, when all that the LORD saith to the Church, the LORD gives grace to hear and obey. But, oh! how sweet beyond the expression of all language is it, when we hear the LORD the FATHER speaking to his dear SON, concerning his blessing the Church in Him? Here GOD the FATHER is the Almighty Speaker; CHRIST is the sum and substance of all his proclamations to the Church; and GOD the HOLY GHOST gives the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, *to believe the record GOD hath given of his SON*. 1 John v. 10, 11.

The blessedness of the words themselves, in confirmation, that He who called CHRIST to be an High Priest, said also unto him, *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*; very plainly were designed to shew, that in no office of Sonship, or Priesthood, did CHRIST, as CHRIST, enter uncalled of GOD. So that the words are very important, in proof of CHRIST's authority. But, it should be observed also, that they are no less very precious, in confirmation of CHRIST's being set up from everlasting, in his high Mediator-character. *To-day* cannot refer to the nature and essence of the SON of GOD, as GOD; for eternity is never called, in Scripture language, *to-day*. And although CHRIST, as CHRIST, could not have been set up in his Mediator-character from everlasting, had he not in his divine nature and essence as GOD, been one with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST from all eternity; yet, here the HOLY GHOST is evidently speaking of CHRIST, as CHRIST, in his character of Mediator. This is the decree which the Book, when unsealed and opened, was found to contain; and the SON of GOD, who came forth from the bosom of the FATHER, came forth to declare. John i. But it was no decree, nor the result of any covenant-settlement, between the persons of the GODHEAD, concerning man's redemption, to declare the SON of GOD, as SON of GOD in his essence of GODHEAD; for this he was, and is, and will be, in the eternity of his nature, for ever. In relation to CHRIST being said to be a Priest, after the order of *Melchizedec*, we shall have occasion to speak of it more fully, Chap. vii. to which therefore I refer.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ;

In these verses we have a most interesting account of our LORD. It will be our mercy to consider what the HOLY GHOST hath here said of JESUS. By *the days of his flesh*, must be understood, the different state to that of his glory. The expression is strong to this purpose. The *days* of his flesh; not the flesh that is his human nature itself, for that he hath the same still, but the time of his abode in our world, accomplishing the redemption of his people. During this period of the SON of God's humiliation on earth, he was subject to all the feelings and infirmities of that nature, which he had assumed, and was *in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*. Heb. iv. 15. And it is our mercy that he was so; because it proves the certainty of his having been made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God. Hence, under this consciousness, I can, and do, go to JESUS, because he knows what my nature is by his own. He not only knows it, as God, but he feels it as man. He, who in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, will assuredly now, in the day of his power, take part in his High Priestly Office with his people, when in their depth of sorrow they cry to the depth of divine mercy. Psm. cxxx. 1—3.

I beg the Reader not to overlook what is said of CHRIST being heard, in that he feared. It is not said that CHRIST was *fearful*, but that he *feared*. There is a *natural* fear, which, no doubt, the LORD JESUS, by taking our nature, felt; for, without it, he could not be said to be in *all things made like unto his brethren*. Heb. ii. 17. And, in confirmation, we read, that in his agony in the garden, *he was sore amazed*. Mark xiv. 33. And beside this *natural* fear, there is a *godly* fear, which marks the LORD's people, and is the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT. The LORD promiseth this as a covenant blessing: Jerem. xxxii. 40. This the LORD JESUS himself possessed, when the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH rested upon him. Isaiah xi. 2. Such views will help us to understand, concerning those cries of JESUS which he offered up, in the days of his flesh, when it is said, *he was heard in that he feared*.

One word more on this interesting passage. The SON of GOD it is said, *learned obedience by the things which he suffered*. By which I presume is meant, that he learned, not as SON of GOD, but in his human nature, by personal feeling, in human sufferings, and human exercises. He acquired in that school, the full apprehension of suffering obedience, in suffering distresses; and, in a personal sense, of what we feel, he knew, what our exercises are. Sweet thought! *In that he himself, hath suffered, being tempted; he knoweth how to succour them that are tempted!*

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

There is somewhat particularly striking, in these words, concerning CHRIST, *being made perfect*. By which, we must of course accept the terms, as referring wholly to his character of Mediator. The perfection of the GODHEAD, can never be said to be *made*. And it is most evident, and plain, from all the concurrent testimony of scripture, that every act of perfection, revealed or made manifest; and all the revelations made of JEHOVAH, are in the Person of the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS. As in *creation*, it is most decidedly said, *that all things were made by him, and that without him was not any thing made that was made*; so in all the after acts of *grace*; every communication of JEHOVAH, in redemption, providence, grace, glory: all are wholly in, and by CHRIST. It is the SON of GOD, which in our nature came forth, from the invisibility of GOD, to make known GOD, and the purposes of his will, to his creatures. And in a more especial manner, the whole work of redemption is said to be his. He became the Author of it; and that eternal. A plain proof of the eternity of *his* nature by whom it is wrought.

Whether CHRIST, or *Melchizedec*, be meant, by what is here said, of having much to relate, and yet hard to be uttered, is not so clearly shewn. The person of CHRIST and his priesthood: or in relation to *Melchizedec*, and his priesthood; vast things are folded up in mystery, which the LORD only can unfold to his people. *Paul* speaking of his LORD, calls his Gospel *the unsearchable, riches of CHRIST*. Ephes. iii. 8. And what is unsearchable cannot be fully revealed. But from the figures, or similitudes, of babes in CHRIST, unskillful in the word of righteousness, we learn, how deep the science is; and how much like children, yea, and little children too, the LORD's people are, during their minority in this world. Very blessed it is, when the LORD the SPIRIT, leads on the people of GOD, to acquire fuller views of the Person, and work, and glory of CHRIST; and when the actings of their faith are going forth, in continual exercise upon Him, as *the LORD our righteousness*. Oh! for grace, to be always sending in, before the LORD, the cry of the soul: LORD! *increase our faith!*

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS great High Priest of thy people! LORD! I would hail thee as both my Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice. Thou wert indeed taken from among men: for in thy human nature, thou wert alone suited for the high office. Who, like JESUS, could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way: from a knowledge, like JESUS, of the infirmities of our nature, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin? And who like JESUS, could be begotten to the Sonship of his holy nature, and be sworn into the office of an high priest for ever, after the order of *Melchizedec*? Surely LORD, none but JESUS could offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins. Neither could there be any thing short of thy divine nature, to offer gifts and sacrifices *upon*, and to give acceptance and efficacy *to*, all offerings, but the Person, blood, and righteousness of GOD's dear SON? And oh! what everlasting efficacy, hath the one offering of my GOD and SAVIOR wrought; and his everlasting unchanging priesthood, made secure, to render both his priesthood and his sacrifice of eternal duration, confirmed also by the oath of Him, who hath sworn, and will not repent; *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec!*

Oh! for grace from GOD the SPIRIT, never to lose sight of the mercy-seat itself, that the whole purpose, for which it is erected is for mercy. There would have needed no mercy-seat, had not CHRIST's children been sinners. Neither would GOD the FATHER have constituted his dear SON, as high Priest, and formed him in our nature in this office, but that he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. The very office itself, and the conscious sense of Him who sits there, are full to this purpose, that GOD hath chosen JESUS expressly with this view; and JESUS hath infinite dimensions of love, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest, in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. LORD! may I never lose sight of these things! may I always have in contemplation thy Person, and thy high priestly office; and by faith, behold my LORD, still clothed in a vesture, dipped in blood, as if to tell me, JESUS wears these robes, in proof of his unceasing office. Let me day by day, come boldly to thy throne, and *find grace to help, in all time of need.*

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

The Hebrews are exhorted to Perseverance in the Faith. The Case of the Unregenerate is considered. The Chapter ends, in a very blessed Manner, in relating the Will of JEHOVAH, that the Heirs of Promise, should be shewn his unchangeable Counsel concerning them!

THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of re-

penitance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

This Chapter opens in a very beautiful and striking manner. CHRIST is considered as the whole sum and substance of the Gospel; and as such, the Gospel is here called *the doctrine of CHRIST*. And the reason is plain. Because all the purpose, will, and decree, of JEHOVAH; in his threefold character of Person, are made known, and revealed in, and by CHRIST. CHRIST himself is JEHOVAH's salvation. Hence, CHRIST is called the CHRIST of God; the sent of God, the sealed of God, the lamb of God, and the like; in all the parts of the divine word. And what is everlastingly to be kept in view, in these our contemplations of CHRIST is, that it is the Person of CHRIST, which is all along spoken of, as the great object of faith. JESUS himself, in a very blessed and comprehensive manner, sums up the whole of the principles of everlasting life, when he saith it is *seeing the Son, and believing on him*. John vi. 40. So that it is not simply the doctrines of CHRIST, but CHRIST himself, which faith hath for its object, of hope and trust, and confidence, and joy; and which of necessity include, the doctrines of CHRIST as the greater include the less. And hence, this blessed Chapter opens with observing that the Church, when brought into a state of regeneration, should leave, (that is, should pass on,) from what we have been taught, of the first rudiments of the word, in repentance, and the like; to study CHRIST. Like those, who from the first hearing of the LORD, are going on to a greater knowledge of him; who passing through the outer courts, are now introduced into the inner apartments of the king's presence, and becoming daily more and more acquainted, with the LORD, in having *fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST*. 1 John i. 3. Paul hath another beautiful train of ideas, to the same effect, when he saith; that the measure of grace, given to the several orders in the Church, is *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature, of the fulness of CHRIST*. Ephes. iv. 12, 13.

I know not, whether I explain myself to the Reader's apprehension. But according to my view of what the HOLY GHOST here saith, it should seem, that the LORD is drawing a line of distinction, between CHRIST, as he is in himself; and the fullness of all things, as he stands to his people, and all ordinances whatever. Repentance, faith, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands and the like, are all in their respective places to be suitably regarded, as means of grace; but all, and every one of them, are but *effects*, and not, in the smallest degree, as any procuring *cause* of our salvation. CHRIST himself is the sole *cause*; and consequently ought to be the sole *object*,

of a believer's hope and trust. And therefore to seek comfort from any thing beside, or to rest in any thing short of centering all in CHRIST, is to seek the living among the dead. Let us (saith the Apostle) leave these, as the principles we began with, when first we heard of the LORD JESUS, and every other ordinance, to live upon the God of Ordinances; and be more earnest to be satisfied, with the substance, than the being amused with the shadow.

Reader! pause over this view of the subject. There is nothing more highly important, to the comfort and peace of a child of God, than a clear apprehension of having CHRIST, our one only portion, and living upon him. Many of CHRIST's little ones, are unconscious of this; and therefore live below their privileges. They know the LORD, and love the LORD, and professedly are looking for salvation only in the LORD. But notwithstanding these things, they are more occupied with what are called the doctrines of CHRIST than CHRIST himself. They enjoy CHRIST at second hand. They look at him through ordinances, and through the exercise of their graces. Surely there is an error here. It is CHRIST himself, which ought to be the first object in our view, and every other concern, but as mediums, and channels, to pass through to him. It is true, indeed, that the doctrines of CHRIST, and the ordinances of CHRIST, are all valuable, as connected with him; and in having him, we have all. But for a child of GOD, to be more intent upon them, than upon him; to be more pleased, with some supposed gracious disposition wrought *in us*, than in the glorious, and complete work, CHRIST hath wrought *for us*; this is putting the *effect*, for the *cause*; and the *servant* in the place of his *master*. This is not making CHRIST in our view, what CHRIST is, in God's view; the Alpha, and Omega the first, and the last: the author and finisher of salvation. CHRIST is the first in all God's thoughts, and the last, and ultimate object of all God's designs. I know, that there are many of God's dear children, who would tremble if they were found, having any other views; and who would not intentionally for the world, place any object before CHRIST, or in the room of CHRIST; but certainly, this is the case, when we take comfort in any grace, without eyeing CHRIST in the grace; and are found magnifying the *effects* of CHRIST's love, more than CHRIST himself. It is a sad consequence of our fallen state, and the imperfection of our faith, when the Person of CHRIST is hidden from our dim-sighted view, in a cloud of his own gifts.

4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God.

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

In the opening of this paragraph, we have those memorable verses of scripture, which, for want of due attention, to divine teaching, by the perversion of *some*, and the mistaken apprehension of *others*, have given rise, to much anxiety, in weak minds, through the slenderness of their faith. There can be no doubt, but that God the HOLY GHOST is drawing the portrait of finished hypocrites; for there is not a single feature, in the whole of what is represented, of those falling away, which belongs to a child of God. The persons here described, under such a flaming profession, never were *in* grace; and therefore impossible to have fallen *from* grace. They fell from a profession only, and as such, it became impossible to renew them again to repentance. As the subject in itself is so highly important, and as a right apprehension of the Lord's words, is so truly interesting to every regenerated child of God, and, especially, the weak in faith, I shall hope the Reader's indulgence, if I enter upon the whole of it, very particularly. For my own part, I am very fully convinced, that the passage, hath no one reference whatever to the Church of God: that the Lord the HOLY GHOST is speaking of hypocrites, and the unregenerate *only*; and that the whole subject, if duly considered, is calculated more to comfort, than to distress the Lord's people. May God the SPIRIT, the blessed Author of his holy word, be our Teacher in it, and guide both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, into all truth.

And here I beg the Reader, again to remark, what I have so often observed to him, in the course of this little work; that God the HOLY GHOST, is writing this whole Epistle to the Church; to them *who are the heirs of salvation*. This is a great point always to have in view, and to keep in remembrance, as we prosecute every part of this Epistle. See Chap. i. 2, 3, 9, 14.

Let me next desire the Reader, to look back to the concluding verses of the preceding Chapter, where he expressly speaketh to the Church, as being in grace, though weak in the faith. The LORD tells them, that when for a time they ought to have been teachers, they were so weak in faith, and their progress in the divine life, had been so inconsiderable, that they need, like little children, to go over their first lessons again. See Chap. v. 12. to the end. And hence, the LORD opens this Chapter, with bidding them to leave the first principles of doctrine, and go on to perfection, namely, to CHRIST himself, Chap. vi. 1. Now let the Reader pause, and ask himself, whether the very expressions, which the LORD the HOLY GHOST here useth, towards the Church, do not very fully prove, that they were in grace, though in a low and languishing condition? How could they be said, that for the time they ought to have been teachers, if they themselves had never learnt? How could even milk suit them, if they were dead in trespasses and sins? Mark these things as proofs, from the LORD the SPIRIT himself, that the Persons to whom he wrote were considered by him as regenerate.

Thirdly. Let the Reader further observe in this paragraph that while the LORD is speaking of the impossibility to renew hypocrites, who made a flaming profession of godliness, but never had felt the power of it; the LORD at the same time is speaking to the Church, and calling them *beloved*, concerning whom he was *persuaded better things, and things which accompany salvation*; that they had *ministered to the saints their labor of love*, and that they were *still ministering*; and that *God would not forget it!* And hence, having before called upon them, to forget first principles, and go on to CHRIST; they would now *shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope, unto the end*: and no longer be *slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. And in a following chapter, the LORD bids them, *to call their former days to remembrance, in which, after they were illuminated, they endured a great fight of affliction*. And therefore, *as they knew in themselves, that they had in heaven a better, and an enduring substance, they should not cast away the confidence, which hath great recompence of reward*. Chap. x. 32—35.

Let the Reader ponder well, these features of character in the Church, to whom God the HOLY GHOST sends this Epistle; and mark in them, the clear testimonies which they carry with them, of being in a state of regeneration. And when he hath duly considered this point, I will next request him to attend to the several outlines, which the same Almighty LORD hath drawn of those unregenerate, concerning whom he speaks in those verses. Let us look at them one by one.

And *first*. They are said to have been *once enlightened*. By which I apprehend is meant, an enlightening in headknowledge. And it is astonishing to conceive, to what lengths men, who have been ag-

customed to sit under the sound of the Gospel may go, in this way, without possessing an atom of saving grace. But the doctrine of CHRIST, in insisting on the new birth, throws to the ground all, and every pretension short of this. John iii. 7. It is *with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness*. Rom. x. 10. If head-knowledge, would make wise unto salvation, the devil himself, would be in a salvable state; for he told CHRIST, he knew him. Mark i. 24. I presume no one will venture to call this enlightening, a mark of regeneration.

Secondly. They are said to have *tasted of the heavenly gift*. Yes, CHRIST is the heavenly gift, in the Gospel sent down from heaven. And these hypocrites had so far tasted it, as to dislike it. Redemption by CHRIST's blood, and righteousness alone: no *Pharisee* will relish, but, like children, which nauseate medicine, though it tendeth to heal, yet spit it out of their mouth. Here again, we find no mark of real grace.

Thirdly. They are said to be made *partakers of the HOLY GHOST*. This, in the first view, carries with it somewhat more plausible; but when looked into, is but seemingly so, for it hath no more of real saving grace, than the former. Every one may, in one sense, be said, to be made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, who is brought under the preaching of the Gospel, and partakes in the ordinances and means of grace. They whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, as well as the faithful, whom the Lord brought into *Canaan* were all alike partakers of the Manna, and drank of the Rock, and had the carnal ordinances of the worldly sanctuary. Heb. ix. 1. But, none except the chosen seed, eyed CHRIST in all. Nay, further, some there have been in all ages of the Church, which may be said to have been made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, in his *outward* gifts of working miracles; and who yet, were never partakers of the HOLY GHOST, in his *inward* regenerating grace. The magicians in the court of *Pharaoh*, to a certain degree, were permitted to exercise power; and *Judas* in the college of Apostles, without all doubt, had the same faculty, in *outward* acts with them. Luke ix. 1. But in the midst of these, there was no inward work of God the SPIRIT on either; and the new-birth is the only infallible character.

Fourthly. Those persons are said, to have *tasted the good word of God* and the *powers of the world to come*. Not drank into the spirit of those precious things; not relished them. The HOLY GHOST dwells particularly on *tasting*, as if to shew their aversion. They tasted of the good word of God, so as to manifest their more deadly hatred to it; and they heard enough of the powers of the world to come, as in their consciences to believe there is an hereafter, in which it will be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; but, like *Balaam*, though sufficiently convinced of those solemn truths, as now and then to send forth the wish *to die the death of the righteous*, yet never awakened by grace to live their life. Numb. xxiii. 10.

Reader! pause over those portraits of character, for they are truly awful, and perhaps much more general than is imagined. But what hath the child of God to do with such things, in whose spirit the HOLY SPIRIT beareth witness that he is born of God? They are indeed very awful monuments for the children of God to contemplate, as they pass on their pilgrimage state. We behold in them to what an height of elevation nature may go in a way of resembling grace.

And they ought to serve, as no doubt God the HOLY GHOST intended them to serve, to make the regenerated the more awakened, to leave the first principles of the doctrines, and press on after CHRIST. But while such clear marks are discoverable between nature and grace, surely the children of God ought not to confound one with the other. To be led into the conclusion, that there may be a falling from grace, because men who never were in grace, have for a while taken up with a profession, and then dropped it, is forming conclusions from false premises. Nature, in her highest attainments, is but nature. Nothing can rise above its level. It is very possible, that by hearing sermons, attending the means of grace, and the like, the understanding may be much enlightened. The young man in the Gospel, who came to CHRIST, at first seemed to look fair for heaven. *Paul*, the Apostle, while a Pharisee, thought himself not far from glory. But in both, at the time, there was not a single act of renewing grace wrought in their heart. The unregenerate mind is still carnal, and enmity against God. The tiger, though chained, is the tiger still. Nothing short of the new-birth is grace. Where this is, it is impossible to fall away, for the Scripture saith, that the highly beloved objects are made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Where this is not, the most flaming profession will go out in obscure darkness. *They have the form, but not the power of godliness.* 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Before I dismiss this view of the subject, I would add one observation more, by way of confirming what hath been said, namely, that in all that is said of those hypocrites, there is not a single circumstance, even hinted at, of those precious fruits and effects being found in them, which arise from grace in the heart, and where a saving act of regeneration hath passed upon the soul. In this whole account of being enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, we read nothing of faith, or love, an adherence to JESUS, or affection to his people; not a word of an holy life and conversation, all which are the sure consequences of the new-birth. But, all that is said from beginning to end, is no more than what may be said of mere professors only, who are like *clouds without water*, carried about with mere wind of doctrine; who, though they have a name to live, are virtually dead before God.

Hence, as is here said, if they fall away from this profession, and openly deny it, and (as hath been seen in many instances,) after having put on a sanctity of appearance, and by restraints induced by the fear or praise of men, have for a while seemingly escaped the pollution which is in the world through lust, at length return, like a dog to his vomit, and as the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire; they only manifest that all that was before seen of them, was but the efforts of nature, not grace. And how shall they be rendered again to the same profession? The thing is impossible. They may indeed, like *Judas*, repent themselves, and do as he did, hang themselves; but the Lord will not grant to them his grace of repentance, in the regeneration of the heart. And for this plain reason. They do in effect, by their denial of that faith they once owned in head, though felt it not in heart, *crucify to themselves the SON of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame.* For, as, when the

Gospel of CHRIST was preached, and made known to them, that is, when they were once enlightened with the head knowledge, that the SON of God had been crucified for his people; and their sense and understanding, though not their affections, were gained to the acknowledgment of those glorious truths, connected with CHRIST and his great salvation; they professed to receive them, and believe them; but now by their apostacy from the truth, as it is in JESUS, they crucify to themselves the SON of God afresh, either by denying his GODHEAD as the SON of GOD, or that his offering on the cross was not a sufficient sacrifice for the redemption of his people; that he hath not risen from the dead; salvation is not finished, and somewhat more is needed for justification before God; in either, or all of these, or the like objections, this is to crucify the SON of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame. And utterly impossible is it, in such cases, to renew such men to repentance. I beg the Reader to mark the expression, they crucify to themselves. Yes! in their apostacy and denial they fully prove CHRIST was never crucified for them; for they have no part, nor lot in the one all-sufficient sacrifice of CHRIST upon the cross; and therefore they insult the soul-travail and agonies which CHRIST sustained by their despising the efficacy of his blood. Such become hardened in iniquity, and their *last end is worse than the first*.

The figure of the earth drinking in the rain, is a beautiful similitude in a way of further illustration. For, as the rain falls alike on the earth, both where the pure herbs are, and where the thorns are; so the dew of the Gospel descends upon the whole visible Church, both real and nominal. But while the regenerated, under the genial influence, bring forth to the glory of God; the mere professor only sends forth nothing but the rank weeds and briars of the state of nature, unredeemed from the curse, and whose end is to be burned.

And the next verse, wherein the Apostle calls the Church *beloved*, and declares his persuasion of better things concerning the members of it, is so utterly opposed to what went before, as can hardly be reconciled, upon any other idea, than that the HOLY GHOST intended the whole representation he hath here made of such flaming profession void of all vital godliness, but as a matter of comfort to the LORD's people under all their short comings and attainments. For, slender as their growth had been, yet they had truly been regenerated. Babies as they still were, yet this argued the new-birth. So that there is, and ever must be, an everlasting difference between the falling away of professors, who never were in grace, and those whom the LORD hath quickened. For while the child of GOD, when born of that *incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever*, (and must so live and abide for ever, however dormant to our view, the spiritual seed sometimes appears, because *it remaineth in him*, 1 Pet. i. 23. 1 John iii. 9.) hath a renewed nature, the Scriptures no where speak of mere professors, amidst all the high elevations of nature, as *being born again*. The stony ground hearers, receive the word with great joy, but no fruit followed, because they had no root. And when those flashes of joy subsided, they soon died away. Hence the Prophet speaks, *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child (regenerated) shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old (yet unregenerated) shall be accursed*. Isa. lxv. 20.

Such, then, according to my view of this blessed Scripture, appears to be the doctrine contained in it. The HOLY GHOST is writing to the Church, considered in a state of regeneration; not unsimilar to the same purport as when writing to the *Corinthians*; babes in CHRIST, but yet too much occupied in worldly things, and of consequence, making slow progress in spiritual attainments, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. He tells them, in opening his Epistle, in confirmation of their new-birth, and justification in CHRIST, that CHRIST *had by himself purged their sins*; and that they were heirs of salvation, Chap. i. 3, 14. that CHRIST had not taken *the nature of angels*, but *the seed of Abraham*, on their account; and that, *having himself suffered, being tempted*; he knew how to *succor them that were tempted*. Chap. ii. 14, 18. that they were *partakers of CHRIST*, as a rich blessing not to be lost, and therefore were to *hold fast their confidence of hope firm to the end*. Chap. iii. 14. And that having such an *High Priest as the SON of GOD*, *passed into the heavens*, they were to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, and *obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*. Chap. iv. 14, 15, 16. These, and the like things, they had been assured of in the preceding chapters; and in this the LORD tells them, that now they ought to go on to perfection, because they might, according to the time they had been in grace, have been teachers; which is a plain proof that they had not only been taught of GOD, and consequently regenerated; but that they had been a long time in a state of conversion. So that as the HOLY GHOST, by the Apostle, in the close of this account blessedly saith, when he calls them also beloved, *we are persuaded better things of you*, (than of those Apostates,) *and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak*: that is though we thus speak of your slow progress in the divine life. And the LORD adds, that GOD's faithfulness and love are engaged to them, *for they had ministered and still did minister to the saints of GOD, as saints of GOD*. An account of which we have, Chap. x. 32. to end, and which is spoken as the effect of their early days conversion. I beg the Reader to turn to that Chapter, in proof. So that upon the whole, however low the waters of the sanctuary then ran to their view, for their comfort, yet they were in grace, and the LORD considered them as such, and charged them to be no longer slothful, but *followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*.

And now, my brother, in summing up the whole, I commend you to the grace of GOD, wherein (if in regeneration) you stand, that *you may rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD*. Painful and humbling as it is to a child of GOD, to feel such continual deadness of soul, such coldness of affection, the little growth in grace, yea, as it sometimes appears to you, rather growing imperfections, and under which you groan continually; nevertheless, these all differ from professing hypocrites. Such never groan, for they never felt the plague of their own heart, neither entered in by the door into the sheepfold. John x. 1. And, therefore, when at any time you behold such meteors in the professing Church, and see the blaze of their supposed gifts and talents, either as preachers or hearers, and then are tempted to draw conclusions unfavorable to yourself, from your long knowledge of the LORD, and your short comings; call to remembrance what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath here taught, and wait and see the end of those

men. *Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end! But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD; he is their strength in time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.* Psm. xxxvii. 39, 40.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath.

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it* was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

In this most blessed portion, we have the same glorious truths confirmed to us, as in the former. Indeed, as I before observed, it should seem, that God the HOLY GHOST intended this precious chapter to answer the double purpose, that while dashing to the ground all the presumptuous hopes of mere professors and hypocrites; he might teach the Church to rest their confidence, not in their attainments, but in the divine faithfulness. It is blessed to observe, how the LORD delights in reminding his people of his word and his oath to *Abraham*. For as CHRIST was sworn into his office by oath, before the world began; so CHRIST, when beginning to manifest himself in his priestly office, did it with an oath. Compare Psm. cx. 4. with Gen. xxii. 16, 17. That this was CHRIST, who made oath to *Abraham*, is unquestionable, for he is called the Angel of the LORD, or the Messenger of the Covenant, as Malachi iii. 1. And it is further blessed to observe the sweetness of expression, *because he could swear by no greater*. Reader! what a proof is this, by the way, of the GODHEAD

of CHRIST? So the LORD again speaks by his servant the Prophet: Isa. xlv. 23. compared with Philip. ii. 10, 11. As JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, can find no object of complacency and delight but in himself, in the image of the invisible God CHRIST JESUS: so none to swear by, to confirm his purposes and decrees concerning the Church, but the same. Compare Matt. xvii. 3. with 2 Pet. i. 16—18.

But we must not stop here. The fatherly love of God, in his most gracious designs towards his Church in CHRIST, is yet to be considered from this blessed Scripture. And, perhaps, there is not a portion in the word of God more in point, to assure to us this first, and eternal, and unchangeable purpose, will, and pleasure of JEHOVAH, in his love to the Church, than in what is here said. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to ponder over it; and I pray the Reader to do it most attentively, looking for divine teaching to make it profitable.

First. Let us observe what is first said: *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsels, confirmed it by an oath.* Pause, Reader! Think of God the FATHER's love, in this gracious, wonderful condescension. Was it not enough, in our GOD and FATHER, to choose the Church in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, to be holy, and without blame before him in love; to adopt the several members of CHRIST's body to himself, as children in CHRIST JESUS: Ephes. i. 4, 5, 6. to present them to CHRIST: John vii. 2. to accept them in CHRIST: to redeem them by CHRIST: to regenerate them by his HOLY SPIRIT; and to give them the assurance of eternal life: I say, Was it not enough, for that God who cannot lie, to manifest, by such rich, free, and unmerited promises, his love of the Church in CHRIST; but as if consulting the weakness, and infirmity of our faith, hath confirmed the whole by an oath? Well may we exclaim with the Apostle: *Behold! what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us?* 1 John iii. 1. Reader! do not overlook this fatherly love of God. Here it is, at this great bottom, on which the whole superstructure of the Church in CHRIST rests; faith begins her triumphs!

Secondly. In this precious view of the subject, observe the reason GOD the FATHER hath assigned, for this special act of grace, both in promising, and confirming that promise with an oath, namely, that the heirs of promise might see, and depend upon the immutability of his counsel; that there is nothing fickle, or inconstant, in the mind of God, towards his people; but that he is of one mind, and none can change him: and, therefore, they might have a strong consolation, who have taken refuge in a Covenant God in CHRIST. Now, Reader! beg of God the Almighty Promiser of such precious things, that you may have always grace, to believe in Him also, as an Almighty Performer of such unspeakable mercy: and, as it is a mercy which is wholly founded in God, and hath nothing to make it sure, in the will or performance of man; you may give God the credit of God, and never for a moment disbelieve the record which he hath given of his SON. 1 John v. 10—12. And, if these things are true, (as who will dare to question,) what must those men be about, or how do they give us any testimonies of their being taught of God, who would insinuate that the everlasting safety of the Church in CHRIST is doubtful, and that the final perseverance of the saints is

unscriptural, and highly dangerous? So then it appears, that God himself is willing, more abundantly, that the heirs of promise should be firmly established, in the blessed consolation of His sovereign, and unchangeable will, and which he hath for that purpose made sure by oath, for their eternal safety and happiness: and poor blind man is unwilling God's people, the heirs of promise, should depend upon a refuge so sure, and certain! How truly awful such a conduct.

Thirdly. One precious point more remains to be noticed in this very sweet portion, namely, the title by which the LORD our God and FATHER here calls his chosen *the heirs of promise*. The very thought of this peculiar mark of God's love, filled the heart of *Paul* with holy joy. Hence, when to the Church he was drawing the everlasting line of distinction between the children of the bond-woman, and the children of the free, he cried out, *now we brethren*, (said he,) *as Isaac was, are the children of promise*. Gal. iv. 28. And children of promise indeed they are. God himself is the FATHER, and the Almighty Promiser of all their being, and well being in CHRIST. This is their charter: *I will be to them a God, and they shall be my people*. Jer. xxxi. 33. God the SON, is himself, in his Mediator-character, the first promise in the Bible, and all the promises are in Him, *yea, and Amen*. Gen. iii. 15. 2 Cor. i. 20. And as CHRIST is the heir of all things, so they are heirs of God, by reason of their being chosen in Him, and having union with Him, and joint heirs with him. Heb. i. 2. Gal. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 17. God the HOLY GHOST, is himself the Almighty SPIRIT of promise, whereby *believers are sealed unto the day of redemption*. Ephes. i. 13, 14. Hence, the children of CHRIST, whom God hath chosen in Him, and given to Him, are heirs of promise, being conceived in the womb of promise, before they were born of flesh. John i. 13. Psm. cx. 3. 2 Tim. i. 1. Titus i. 1. James i. 18. And, as to eternal life, they are all the sure heirs of this promise also, as in grace they are the sure possessors, when born again of the HOLY GHOST, from the *Adam-nature* of sin and corruption. See a string of the richest promises to this amount. Isa. lxvi. 8—14.

I must not enlarge. But, did I dare to swell the pages of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, what an endless subject is here proposed in God the FATHER's purposes; CHRIST, our refuge, anchor, and sure abiding place; and God the SPIRIT opening to our faith a view of Him, our forerunner, even JESUS, entered within the vail, having taken possession of the promised inheritance, in the name, and for the persons of all the heirs of promise. But I must shut up this Chapter. Views of *Melchizedec* will meet us in the next. And the LORD pardon the defects in the Commentary on this; and bless what is offered, as far as is agreeable to his truths, and the Reader's profit, in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

CALLED upon as the Church is, in this Chapter, to leave behind first principles in the awakening of the soul to the convictions of sin, and having then but slight views of CHRIST, let us seek from God the SPIRIT, that growth in grace which marks those who have long known the LORD, and long found our own nothingness in every

thing out of CHRIST; that we may discover that life, and light, and joy, are only in CHRIST; while deadness, darkness, and sorrow, are in all we say or do.

But, Reader! while divine teaching infallibly leads every child of God into this conclusion, sooner or later, let no child of God be led away, from the features of character God the HOLY GHOST hath here drawn of hypocrites, to fancy that such distinguish him also. They differ as wide as the east from the west. God's children are indeed full of defects and unworthiness, and undeservings; nevertheless, they are still children. The new spiritual life imparted to them in regeneration, however, to their view, at times appears hardly discernible, is in them *a well of water, springing up to everlasting life*. But, the unawakened nature of the hypocrite, amidst all appearance of plentiful showers, is all outward and forming pools only, like *Job's* friends, prove deceitful, as the brook which in summer seasons dry away.

Reader! if so be the LORD hath caused you to know his grace, and by regeneration you are led to the precious discovery of being an heir of promise, see here the unspeakable love of God, and his willingness more abundantly, that his children shall live upon, and rejoice in, the immutability of his counsel. Oh! the strength of that consolation, founded in God the FATHER's will! JESUS's person, blood, and righteousness, and the HOLY GHOST's regenerating, sanctifying, and renewing mercy. JESUS! be thou the anchor of my soul, both sure and stedfast! Not like the mariner's anchor beneath, but above; not founded on any thing breakable, but in things which are eternal. Not formed by the wisdom of men; but in the power of God. Precious, precious JESUS! thou art the Rock of ages! Thy work is perfect. Blessed, for ever blessed, be God, for JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

Some Account of Melchizedec. CHRIST blessedly spoken of, under his High Priestly Character, and the Excellency of his Person and Office.

FOR this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without de-

scent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God ; abideth a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham :

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises:

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes ; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedec met him.

The HOLY GHOST, by the Apostle, had more than once mentioned this extraordinary person *Melchizedec* ; but now he enters into a more particular account of him in this Chapter. He hath given us several very leading characters in relation to his office, by way of illustrating the glorious Person, of whom he was a type, which are truly interesting. And, although the LORD hath been pleased to leave some obscurity in the subject who *Melchizedec* was, yet, there is enough to call forth the warmest praises of the Church to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for an information which tends to raise our views of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the most exalted and blessed manner.

The LORD opens the Chapter with his name, *Melchizedec*, which is a compound word from *Melek*, King, and *Tzedek*, Justice ; and, as the blessed SPIRIT himself hath rendered it, *King of righteousness*. If the Reader hath my *Poor Man's Concordance* by him, which was lately published in Penny Numbers, he will find a particular account of this name, *Melchizedec*.

The LORD the SPIRIT next proceeds to state the scriptural history, which He had before given of *Melchizedec*, as in Gen. xiv. 18, &c. in which we behold him in his High Priestly office. See Gen. xiv. and Commentary. And having thus introduced him to the Church, both

by name and office, and described him as *King of righteousness*, and *King of peace*; the LORD adds one feature more concerning the wonders of his Person, which had not been before mentioned, and which raiseth the greatness of his character, beyond any being merely human, for he saith, *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the SON of GOD, abideth a Priest continually*. And now the HOLY GHOST bids the Church consider how great this man was.

It hath pleased the LORD to throw a veil over the person of this most extraordinary man, which must for ever preclude an absolute decision concerning him, while the Church is in her present time state. But, as a type of JESUS, what is here said is abundant to give the most satisfying conviction, how infinitely great the LORD JESUS must be, to whom a man, without father or mother, or beginning of days, or end of life, only ministered but as a shadow. I will beg the Reader's consideration of the subject in this point of view, as of all others the most profitable.

Amidst all the obscurity we meet in this account of *Melchizedec*, if he be considered as a type of CHRIST, nothing could have been so happily chosen for that representation. He is declared to be greater than *Abraham*, with whom the promises of the Covenant were deposited. He is said to be greater than *Aaron*: for he was not only priest of the most High GOD, before *Aaron* was born, but before the Church of *Israel* was formed. And as typical of CHRIST, *Melchizedec* is set forth as no other type, in all the word of GOD is done, I mean for the eternity of CHRIST's nature; for this could never have been shadowed by any expressions like those which conceal *Melchizedec's* origin, in having neither *father, nor mother, beginning of days or end of life*. I wish the Reader to pay a more than ordinary attention to this great point.

Upon a subject of such vast moment, I desire never to speak decidedly; but rather propose, what I have to offer, in a way of question, to the Reader's own judgment. And hence I would ask, on the supposition, GOD the HOLY GHOST really intended, that *Melchizedec* should be a type of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; how could he represent the eternity of CHRIST, in any form of words than in the very words he hath chosen? *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, or end of life*. In all the types of CHRIST, which have relation to his *offices*, there is no obscurity whatever. The *Brazen Serpent*, the *Rock*, the *Manna*, the *Passover*: the morning and evening *Lamb*: the day of *atonement*; all these are types and shadows, which have their accomplishment in CHRIST's *offices*: and these, when explained by divine teaching, open very clear, and decided demonstrations, to the several parts of CHRIST's *offices*, unto which they ministered. But here, where GOD the HOLY GHOST, would set forth to the Church, the eternity of CHRIST's *Person*; there was no being, either man, or angel, which could in any way, or form whatever, prefigure CHRIST's eternal nature; and therefore *Melchizedec*, shall typify the greatness and superiority of his *priesthood*, beyond every other; but of his *Person*, the eternity of his Being shall be shewn by a total silence, from whence he sprung; and declaring him to have been *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days,*

nor end of life. I beg once more the Reader to study the subject a little closely. I do not (as I said before) wish to speak decidedly. But on the presumption, God the HOLY GHOST did intend, to bring forward this man *Melchizedec*, as a type of JESUS; let any one say, how could the LORD more fully imply by figure, the eternity of the SON of GOD, acting as our High Priest? In all the records of men we meet in scripture history, it is the invariable custom, to introduce Persons, who are more eminently distinguished than others, with their genealogy, from father to son: and sometimes, this is carried on through a long pedigree. But here, where the greatest man among the Patriarchs which ever lived; greater than *Abraham*, greater than *Aaron*, and the Priest of the most high God is introduced, we are told that he is *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.* And wherefore this obscurity? Is it not (I ask the question) because, in this very instance, this greater than *Abraham*, and all the Patriarchs, was hereby to typify His Person, in the eternity of his nature, concerning whom the Prophet, in after ages demanded; *And who shall declare his generation?* Isaiah liii. 8.

I pass by making any observations, on the several things spoken of, concerning the inferiority, implied in the Levitical priesthood. For if the eternity of CHRIST, as here shadowed forth, be admitted, all beside follow of course. *Levi*, receiving tythes, who paid tythes in *Abraham*, is a beautiful thought, to represent the oneness of CHRIST, and his people. For all the seed of CHRIST, are in CHRIST virtually, and truly so, before they are brought to the knowledge of CHRIST, as *Abraham* did to *Melchizedec*. It is a blessed point to have always in view, that by the antient and eternal settlements among the Persons of the GODHEAD; CHRIST and his seed, were from everlasting One. That holy portion of human nature, which was to form one with the divine nature of the SON of GOD, and thereby constitute one Person, CHRIST, contained in it, the millions of the persons of CHRIST's seed, which were to arise out of it, to form CHRIST's mystical body, to all eternity. Hence it is said, that both *He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all of one.* Heb. ii. 11. So that the seed of CHRIST, before they are brought to lay hold of CHRIST, are, (as *Levi* was, in the loins of *Abraham*,) one with CHRIST, from all eternity. JESUS could not have been the Head of his body the Church, as Head, one moment before the body, as the body: neither the everlasting FATHER before he had children; neither Husband before the Church was his Wife. So very blessed is the consideration of the eternity of CHRIST's Person; and his character, and relation, as the Head of his body the Church; *the fulness of him, which filleth all in all.* Ephes. xxii. 23.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest.

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*:

21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood,

So much having been said of *Melchizedec*, and his ministry, as typical of CHRIST, by way of shewing the infinite greatness of CHRIST's Person; and the infinite superiority of CHRIST's office of

Priesthood to all other; the Chapter now takes up the subject, in shewing, the imperfection of the law, and the Priesthood, under that dispensation, to answer the purpose of salvation; and which become, as it was designed, to enhance the dignity of CHRIST, and to shew the vast importance of his office of Priesthood. Perfection was never intended by the Levitical Priesthood. It was designed, but as *a shadow of good things to come*. *The very nature of its service, carried with it the fullest conviction, that it never could, as *pertaining to the conscience, make the comers thereunto perfect*. The daily use of it, manifested its weakness. And void of an eye to some substance, which it was supposed to prefigure, there could be no one affinity whatever, between the sin of a man, and the blood of a beast. Hence the Apostle saith; *the law made nothing perfect*. The Sinner, the Levite, the Priest, and the whole service, could none of them derive sanctity, nor communicate sanctity by it. But the whole, being simply an outward sign, or symbol, of some more important effect, shadowed forth its own imperfection; the more fully to introduce the substance, to which it referred. And thus, as a preliminary to the Gospel of CHRIST, became very useful in its way; for while it made nothing perfect, *the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God*.

And not only the law, but the priests of the law, manifested their insufficiency. No oath either introduced them at the first, or afterwards confirmed them, in their office. But JESUS's consecration had both. Moreover, the multitude of the daily Priests; and the necessity of their succession, by reason of death, carried together with both, the imperfection of their order. Whereas CHRIST, in the eternity of his nature; and the perpetual, and unchanging quality of his office; demonstrated the truth of his having been called to it by Him, who sware, and could not repent, when he said to him, *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec*. Psm. cx. 4.

I must not trespass. But what a multitude of sweet thoughts, arise out of this one view of JESUS and the perfection of his Priesthood, as contrasted to the imperfection of the law, and the poverty, and helplessness of the Levitical priesthood? And again, how is the whole heightened in the recollection, that the very appointment of all before CHRIST was only shadowy representations; but his the substance, to which they all ministered? And still more as all were but mere shadows, and CHRIST the one only matter of the whole, his very Priesthood must be engaged to render the whole effectual. CHRIST had never been made an High Priest, nor introduced with such a world of solemnity, and importance into it, but with the fullest assurance, that all the purposes of his high administration, must be accomplished. So infinitely precious, and so everlastingly made sure, are the ends, for which CHRIST was made an High Priest; and that *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

The opening of this paragraph, in what is said of CHRIST's ability to save; and which carries with it also his disposition to save, which is the very nature of his office, and for which he was made High Priest, is, without exception, one of the sweetest and most persuasive of all possible arguments, to come to the pardon-office of JESUS CHRIST: The Almightyness of his Person; the efficacy of his sacrifice; the unceasing, and everlasting nature of his office, as High Priest: and the consciousness of his ever living, to see the whole rendered effectual, in the offering he once made, for his people on the cross; what a strength of argument the whole brings with it, to lead the LORD's people to his throne? And when it is said, that this salvation of the LORD JESUS, is to the uttermost; what is the uttermost? Take in the greatest extent the imagination can conceive, to the utmost horizon of thought, yet this ceaseth to be the uttermost, if there be aught beyond it? And what a lift up this is to all the discouragements of temptation; all heart-straitenings in prayer; all coldness, deadness, wanderings, fears, unbelief, and the like. For it is not, what the uttermost of our imagination makes it, but what that uttermost in GOD's view is. Not what we conceive of divine mercy; but what that divine mercy can, and will shew, in displaying the riches of grace?

And if the first verse in this paragraph is so full of sweetness and persuasion, in the contemplation of CHRIST's office to encourage poor sensible sinners to come to GOD by CHRIST, how exceedingly the argument is heightened, when to this is added, as the next verse speaks, CHRIST's personal glory and greatness. *For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* Was there ever any form of words like these, brought together into one view to set up and exalt, the glory of the LORD JESUS, and to establish all the divine qualities of his essential, and mediatorial perfections? Surely the man must be hoodwinked, and blind, to all the possibilities of blindness, who can read this account of the SON of GOD in our nature, and yet pause a moment, from concluding the Almightyness of his character. So perfectly *holy*, in the underived nature of that holiness, as to be holiness itself, in the abstract. So *harmless*, that no guile was found in his mouth. So *undefiled* that no taint of evil could affect

him : being in himself altogether pure. And so *separate from sinners*, that though taking the nature of those he came to redeem, he had none of their defilement; underived from the *Adam* corrupt stock, but formed holy, and pure, by miraculous impregnation, without the intervention of an human father; And *made higher than the heavens* : that is higher than all the Angels, having, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. And here I beg the Reader to pause, and mark, the striking distinction in the Mediator-character from that of Angels. The elect Angels are indeed sinless. But they are in themselves capable of sinning. And that they are preserved from sinning, is because they are elect. For as Angels which were not elect have fallen ! so their nature is thereby proved capable of falling. Hence we read, *that God puts no trust in his servants; and his Angels he charged with folly*; Job. iv. 18. by which is meant, a capability of sinning. So that the personal glory of CHRIST, as CHRIST, is infinitely beyond all creation; yea, CHRIST is the source, and cause, of the Angels being kept from sin; as elect Angels in him. He himself is *made higher than the heavens*. Reader ! do not overlook, or ever lose sight of CHRIST, in this most blessed view of his personal holiness and glory.

And what follows, in the succeeding verses of the Chapter, have yet ^a further tendency to illustrate, and confirm the same most precious, soul-reviving truth. *Who needeth not daily, as those high priests did, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people*?. If men would, or could read their Bibles with an enlightened eye, here they would behold that everlasting line of distinction, drawn between CHRIST and every other high Priest, as would silence in endless darkness, the daring presumption of those wretched, and deluded men, who presume to question the GODHEAD of CHRIST. If CHRIST was so holy, harmless, and undefiled, that he needed no offering, no sacrifice, no mediation for himself; can any thing more fully express the divinity of his nature, than such an account by the HOLY GHOST? Surely he would have needed to have made an offering for himself, as well as for others, had he not as GodMAN, been all this as here described; for it was this personal holiness of nature, which made all offerings for himself useless, and gave such everlasting merit and efficacy to the offering he once offered for others. Heb. x. 14.

One word more. The close of this Chapter, is as interesting in proof to this doctrine, as either of the precious verses which went before, and forms a delightful finish to the whole subject. *For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity*. Yes ! indeed, for the law is obliged to make such men priests, if the law will have high priests at all. They must offer blood for themselves first, and then for the errors of the people. Heb. ix. 7. And such high priests had all infirmity, yea sins. And they were many, not one; for they were not able to continue, by reason of death. So then, they were sinners themselves, and they offered for sinners. Alas ! what sins of themselves, or of others, could their offerings take away ? Now look to JESUS. *The word of the oath made CHRIST the SON an High Priest, and that for ever; yea, consecrated for evermore*, an eternal, unchangeable, unsinning priesthood. Psm. cx. 4. It is said to have

been since the law. Yes! the Levitical priesthood was formed to shadow forth CHRIST's priesthood. But CHRIST was a Priest in the day he was begotten. Psm. ii. 7. Heb. v. 5, 6. And also, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. Nevertheless, the public ministry of CHRIST's priesthood, and sacrifice, was since the law, when *by the one offering of himself once offered, he perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 14. But his SONSHIP, hath been from everlasting. And this was prior to his Priesthood; and both gave dignity, and efficacy to it. Reader! what a cloud of witnesses have we to the Personal glory, and essential Divinity, of the SON of GOD! And what then must be the eternal worth, and efficacy of all his Offices?

REFLECTIONS.

EVERLASTING thanks be given to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for this most sweet and precious Chapter. Never, surely, but for the LORD himself explaining to us in this portion of his holy word, what he had before related concerning *Melchizedec*, in other parts of his revelation; should we have conceived suitable apprehensions on the subject. But now, by his gracious condescension, in saying so much as is here related, of that Priest of the Most High GOD, do we behold the wonders of his Person, and Office, and the still greater Personage, to whom all that went before ministered. Hail! thou great, thou Almighty *Melchizedec* of thy People? Truly, LORD JESUS! thou hast been sworn into thine office by JEHOVAH's Oath; and well therefrom do I feel confidence to come unto thee, as the LORD's High Priest, and my High Priest for ever. LORD! I desire grace, and power, to do what is here commanded the Church, namely, to consider, how great the *Melchizedec* was, whom *Abraham* saw; and therefrom to consider, how much greater my LORD JESUS is, to whom even *Melchizedec* acted but as a type and shadow!

Precious LORD JESUS! thou art a Priest upon thy throne! Thou hast an unchangeable priesthood! And indeed, and in truth, such an High Priest as thou art, my poor soul needed: One that can, and will save to the uttermost, all that come to GOD by thee; and One who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And, very sure I am, that though, in thy personal glory, all this, and more, is thine; yet, amidst all the exaltation of thy state, no change hath taken place in thy nature; JESUS, is JESUS still. The same lovely, and all-loving JESUS. Here below, men that have infirmities are made priests; but our JESUS that is above, though touched with the feelings of our infirmities, yet, in himself, he is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He knows our frame by his own, though without sin; and his priesthood is for ever. LORD! take up my cause, for sure I am, I shall not then fail; thou art consecrated for evermore!

C H A P. VIII.

CONTENTS.

We have more, and more precious Views of the LORD JESUS in this Chapter. CHRIST the true tabernacle. God's Covenant Love, secured in CHRIST, by Word and Oath.

NOW of the things which we have spoken *this* is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

I would not for the world knowingly strain a single word in scripture, by way of making it speak more, or less, than is intended; but I would pause over these verses, and humbly ask, whether God the HOLY GHOST, in the opening of this Chapter, did not mean to call the Church to behold CHRIST as the sum and substance of all revelation? Let the Reader recollect, how blessedly the HOLY GHOST had been speaking, in the *seven* preceding Chapters, concerning CHRIST. Beginning in the first Chapter with proclamations of his eternal Power and GODHEAD, then of his Mediator glories; and in the second Chapter, of his human nature; and in the following, largely dwelling upon the many sweet, and endearing features of his offices, and particularly of his Priesthood: and, having followed him from the time of having purged our sins by himself, until he held him forth as seated as *a Priest upon his throne*, in glory; the LORD the SPIRIT begins this Chapter in a form of words, such as can hardly be found in the whole book of God. *Now of the things* (saith the LORD) *which we have spoken this is the sum.* As if the whole of revelation was here brought into one view, in the Person of CHRIST. And no doubt it is. For CHRIST, as CHRIST, is the visible JEHOVAH. There could have been no revelation of JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Person, but in, and by Him. He is come forth from the bosom of the FATHER to declare him. John i. 18. And, let the Reader further observe, how blessedly the HOLY GHOST represents him, as having passed into the heavens, and there *sat down*, contrary to the priests on earth, who always *stood* ministering. Chap. x. 11. Numberless beauties are contained in this short verse. *First.* JESUS being seated as the High Priest of his people, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, carries with it the most palpable conviction, that he hath by himself purged our sins; and in proof, is set down on the right hand of God. *Secondly.* It becomes no less a proof, that CHRIST hath been accepted as our Surety in redemption, or he never would have been received there. CHRIST's sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, is in perfect conformity to God's word, and oath. *Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Psm. cx. 1. John xvii. 4. *Thirdly.* Having such an High Priest there, our Advocate, whom God the FATHER heareth alway; the same becomes an everlasting assurance,

that all the concerns of his people, JESUS undertakes, and accomplisheth. No prayers can go unheard. No petitions remain unanswered. And all the ascension-gifts he is purposely exalted to bestow, are as certain, and sure, as if they were already in hand. God the HOLY GHOST is come down, in confirmation, that CHRIST is gone up. *He hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.* Psm. lxxviii. 18. And, *lastly*, to add no more; the sum and substance of the whole scripture being to tell the Church, that He who was dead, and is alive, and now liveth for evermore, and is on the throne of the Majesty on high, is purposely there for his people, waiting to be gracious, and delighted to be by them employed. So he appeared to *John*, in his priestly vesture, dipped in blood, as if to say: See! I wear the vestments of office. Bring all your causes to me, and leave all with confidence in my hand.

But we must not stop here. He that is our High Priest, the HOLY GHOST adds, is also a *Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the LORD pitched, and not man.* These offices also, are special, personal offices, peculiarly belonging to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and to no other, and in which his people have everlasting concern. This sanctuary is not a *worldly sanctuary of carnal ordinances*; such as we read of Chap. ix. 1, 10. Neither is it an *earthly sanctuary*; neither is it an *heavenly* one; for then, it needed not to have been said, which *the LORD pitched and not man.* For it is well known, none but the LORD is the maker of heaven. But by the sanctuary, I should apprehend, is meant, the whole body of the Church, whom CHRIST, by the one offering of himself, once offered, hath perfected for ever, as sanctified in himself. Psm. cxiv. 2. Isaiah lxiii. 18. And by the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man, can be meant no other, according to my view, than the human nature of CHRIST, *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.* And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because, all that is here said, is with the intention to magnify and exalt the LORD JESUS, by shewing, that all that was in the wilderness Church, was designed, but as the shadows of good things to come, and that all pointed to, and centered in CHRIST. Now, as the tabernacle in the wilderness, had frequently the *Shechinah*, or manifestation of the divine presence in it; here, was a lively representation of the SON of GOD, tabernacling in our nature, when *he became flesh, and dwelt among us.* And as the tabernacle was but a poor building, and to outward appearance, looking very wretched and mean; so the human nature, in which the SON of GOD tabernacled, was poor indeed, and had nothing of beauty, that we should desire him.

But the greatest point in this description remains to be considered. It is said, that the LORD pitched this true tabernacle, and not man. Yes! The whole Persons of the GODHEAD co-operated in the work. GOD the FATHER, prepared the body. So spake CHRIST by the SPIRIT of prophecy. Compare Psm. xl. 6, 7. with Heb. x. 5. GOD the SON took the nature of man upon him. Heb. ii. 14, 16. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, formed that holy thing, so called. Luke i. 35. Reader! do not hastily pass away, from the view of a subject so truly blessed. This true tabernacle which the LORD pitched, and not man, is the only real temple, either in heaven, or on earth,

for the divine residence. The divine essence, may, in one sense, be said to dwell every where; for, in the perfection of his Omnipresence, he fills heaven and earth. And God dwells by the influences of his SPIRIT in the hearts of his people. But it is not in either sense of this meaning, the tabernacle of the human nature of the SON of GOD, is inhabited by the indwelling residence of JEHOVAH. It is bodily in CHRIST, as fire in iron; essentially, personally, and eternally. Moreover, this is the only temple, CHRIST's body, for meeting with his people. Here, the LORD comes to meet and bless them. In him, the LORD speaks to his people; and they to him. Oh! the blessedness of this true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man. How ought the redeemed to delight in CHRIST, and to be always going to CHRIST. It was the consciousness of this made *David* cry out; *One thing have I desired of the LORD that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.* Psm. xxvii. 4. Oh! for grace, to be often eyeing CHRIST, as the sum of the things the HOLY GHOST hath here spoken. Such an High Priest, set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the LORD pitched, and not man!

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

In the close of the first of these verses, I beg to observe, that there is no word in the original for what our translators have rendered *man*. And as the pronoun *this* might have been more properly connected with the word *person*, being more agreeable to the analogy of faith, I confess that I prefer it. The reading then will be, wherefore it is of necessity, that this *person* have somewhat also to offer. And this is true. As *man*, considered without an eye to the GODHEAD, he had nothing equivalent to offer. And, as God, without respect to his manhood, he could not offer. But in the union of both, as one *person*, God and Man, oh! what an offering did he make, whereby he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified! Heb. x. 10—14.

I have so largely dwelt on the blessed features of the LORD JESUS in his priestly office, in the preceding Chapters of this Epistle, that it will be the less necessary to enlarge on them here. It is very true, indeed, God the HOLY GHOST evidently takes pleasure in bringing them continually forward. And what that matchless Teacher delights in, we may well follow. And so I would indeed, if the limits of a *Poor Man's Commentary* admitted it. But as this is not the case, I rather refer the Reader to what hath been offered upon CHRIST's priesthood, and particularly in the fifth Chapter, than swell the present pages.

But one point must be noticed here, as not being noticed before, in relation to CHRIST's priesthood, namely, when it is said, *for if he were on earth, he should not be a priest*. This is a subject very highly interesting to be considered, and which ought to be well understood. In the explaining of which, it will serve to throw no small light on it, if we look back and observe, how the HOLY GHOST hath throughout scripture, shadowed forth CHRIST in the law. When the High Priest, on the day of atonement, had made the sacrifice for the sins of the people, he entered with the blood into the holy place. Levit. xvi. 2—15—34. And this is explained to the Church, of what God the HOLY GHOST intended by it. Heb. ix. 6—12. and Commentary. Now, then, had the High Priest, when making the sacrifice, not gone into the holy place, the service would have been incomplete. Hence, in like manner, if CHRIST, to whom this whole service referred, remained on earth, after that he had made his soul an offering for sin, the presentation of it before God on the mercy-seat would not have been compleat! It was one great part of his office to carry up his blood to the throne, (the propitiatory,) as a full and compleat propitiation. Having paid the ransom of his Church by his blood, he virtually takes the price, the current coin of the merchant with him to heaven, and puts it down upon the mercy-seat. Here was, in the fullest sense of the words, offering both gifts and the sacrifice for sin. And hence it is said, that the priests on earth serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.

And, moreover, it must be further added, that CHRIST's priesthood, which, after the order of *Melchizedec*, was an everlasting priesthood, could not have been accomplished had he remained on earth. For, in this case, how would he have entered into heaven as the forerunner of his people? How would he have gone as a public head, and been placed above all principality and power? How would he have taken possession of heaven in our name; and we, by faith, beholding ourselves *now raised up together, and made to sit together with him in heavenly places, in CHRIST JESUS*? Ephes. ii. 6. Reader! do you not know what it is now, by faith, thus to realize and substantiate things that are far off, and bring them nigh? If your faith be the faith of God's elect, the faith once delivered to the saints, you cannot but know it by this divine property, which the HOLY GHOST hath marked it by; it is *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. For by it the Elders obtained a good report. Heb. xi. 1, 2. True, indeed, you are not yet entered upon the heavenly country. But, like them, you have seen it afar off, and are persuaded of it, and have by faith embraced it. *We see not yet* (saith the Apostle,) *all things put under Jesus*. No! For he hath *not yet made all his enemies his footstool*. This will take place at the final retribution of all things, *when he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. Isa. liii. 10. But, in the mean time, we see him *crowned with glory and honor*; and ourselves, by faith, crowned with him, in the sure and certain expectation of it, when he will come to take us home to himself, that *where he is, there we may be also*. John xiv. 3.

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God

when he was about to make the tabernacle : for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

It is very blessed to behold how attentive the HOLY GHOST was, in all his appointments relating to the Church in the wilderness, that every thing should be the express pattern of CHRIST, and his Gospel Church. And, while it serves to teach us how infinitely important the things themselves must be to which those shadows ministered ; how sure is it also, that GOD the SPIRIT was the Almighty Minister then, as He is now.

In relation to the better ministry of CHRIST, and the order of the New Testament dispensation being established upon better promises, every part and portion of the word of GOD most fully shews. But what I beg the Reader more immediately to keep in view, and never lose sight of, is this, that JESUS himself is the whole of the covenant. So JEHOVAH declared him to be, Isa. xlix. 8. and so his people, when regenerated of the HOLY GHOST, prove him to their soul's comfort. It was formed with JESUS in the eternal counsels, before the world. It was confirmed by JESUS, during the time-state of his abode on earth. To Him the whole was entrusted. By Him the whole hath been fulfilled. All the blessings of it are *in* his Almighty hands ; and *from* Him, all must flow of grace here, and glory hereafter. So that the LORD JESUS comprehends in his own Person, as God-Man Mediator, the one, full, and compleat covenant. He is the Messenger, the Administrator, the Head, the Sum, the Substance of the whole. Precious LORD JESUS ! blessed be GOD, who hath given thee for a covenant of the people !

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah :

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with

the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

In order to have a clear apprehension of what is here said, it will be necessary to attend to the words of scripture, simply as they are. When the HOLY GHOST speaks, as in this place, of a *first* covenant, and a *second*; and of a *new* covenant, and an *old*; the Reader must not suppose is meant, that the one differed from the other in substance, or that any change had taken place in the mind of God. Not so. There hath been from everlasting in reality but one and the same covenant, namely, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He is the sole covenant of the people. Neither can his Gospel be called a new revelation, differing from the Old Testament in sum and substance, for the Gospel was preached to *Abraham*. Gal. iii. 8. I have shewn this, I hope, very clearly, in the Preface to this *Poor Man's Commentary*. But the meaning of this most beautiful passage (which is taken from the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34.) is the spiritual illustration of God's covenant in CHRIST, in which the several agencies of each glorious person of the GODHEAD, are blessedly shewn in the FATHER's electing, pardoning, justifying, accepting love; God the SON's betrothing, redeeming grace; and God the SPIRIT's quickening, sanctifying, sealing mercy. And the blessed effects arising from the whole are also here displayed, in the spiritual knowledge which the whole Church of God in CHRIST shall derive from the latter-day dispensation. So much of divine light, and divine knowledge, shall be diffused by the openly tabernacling of the SON of God in our nature, that from the highest to the lowest, and from the least to the greatest, all the children shall know the LORD; and that not in an hearsay or speculative apprehension of God, but a personal, spiritual, soul-enjoyment of Him. God shall be known in his threefold character of Person, in the FATHER's love, the SON's grace, and the SPIRIT's fellowship, and in such a blessed way and manner, as shall refresh the whole Church, and raise up a revenue of glory to the LORD. Isa. liv. 13. John xiv. 23—27.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! is this indeed the sum and substance of what God the HOLY GHOST hath been blessing the Church with, in such gracious teachings concerning 'the LORD JESUS; that He is gone into heaven, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of Majesty: oh! then, for grace to follow him thither by faith! For, as sure as JESUS the SON of GOD is gone there, so sure is He gone as the Head and Husband, the Surety and Representative of his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all*. Yes! He hath taken possession of heaven itself in their name. And all his redeemed ones may already, by virtue of their union with Him, behold themselves by faith, as *raised up together with CHRIST, and made to sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS*. Oh! glorious JESUS! *Minister of the Sanctuary*, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD hath pitched, and not man!

And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this precious scripture! We now see, through thy divine teaching, how needful it was for our LORD to go away. Had he remained on earth, though he had made his soul an offering for sin, yet could he not have been a priest. Yes! thou dear LORD, it was necessary that thou shouldest priest it also for thy redeemed in heaven. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! give us grace to be always following our JESUS by faith, and employing our great High Priest with our daily prayers and praises, until we come to see him, as He is, and dwell with him for ever.

Praises to our GOD and FATHER for his covenant CHRIST. Oh! may GOD the FATHER be to me a GOD in CHRIST, and make me his among his people. Oh! that JESUS, my Husband, may be to me my unceasing High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, my Teacher, and the Glorifier of JESUS unto the day of his coming!

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter some Account of the Furniture of the Old Tabernacle in the Wilderness. To this succeeds a most blessed Account of CHRIST, whom the HOLY GHOST meant to prefigure by this worldly Sanctuary.

THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of

the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

How gracious was it in God the HOLY GHOST, to give the Church an account, as he hath here done, of the furniture of the tabernacle; and so blessedly explained the subject, as he hath hereafter done in this chapter, in relation to CHRIST. Oh! the goodness and condescension of God the SPIRIT! Truly was it said, by our dear LORD, concerning him, when teaching his disciples to be on the look out for his coming after CHRIST's departure, *he shall not speak of himself*. And where do we find the blessed SPIRIT speaking of himself? *But he shall glorify me*, said JESUS. And, oh! Reader, how doth the HOLY GHOST indeed glorify my LORD to my poor soul, when He shews me more and more the plague of my own heart; and that there is none in heaven or earth that can bring a remedy for it, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? John xvi. 13, 14. I do hope, before we close this Chapter, both the Writer and Reader (if it be the LORD's holy will) may find cause to raise a renewed monument of praise to the HOLY SPIRIT, for what He hath here revealed of all-precious JESUS!

I desire the Reader, one by one, to observe the several articles here enumerated, in what belonged to what is called the first covenant. All were costly. And as all was of God's own appointment in divine service, and yet were but typical and preparatory to the Gospel Church of CHRIST, they serve the more to shew of what vast importance in God's sight must have been, and still is, that glorious dispensation by CHRIST, which was thus set forth with such a world of attention? The first court, which was called *the holy place*, and used in daily service, contained the *candlestick*, to intimate, perhaps, that as the light there shining communicates brightness around, so CHRIST, in his Church, is the sole light of his Church. The *table*, which is said to have been made of *Shittim-wood*, Exod. xxv. 10, and which was not liable to be worm-eaten, was perhaps typical of the incorruptible nature of CHRIST's humanity, which, though subject to death, as the sacrifice for sin, yet not to corruption. Psm. xvi. And as a table is a place of fellowship in families, where the several members partake of the same viands, it is probable that the HOLY GHOST might intend to convey, by this representation, the communion and fellowship CHRIST and his members have with each other. All these were, in what was called the *sanctuary*, or holy place, to distinguish it both from the world without, and the holy of holies within. Here was performed all the ordinary service of the priests, in their daily ministration. CHRIST must be the daily light, and life, and food, and communion of his people. To Him do all his redeemed, whom he hath made kings and priests to the FATHER, daily come,

and by him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. Heb. xiii. 15.

By the second veil is meant *within* the veil, for there was but one veil in the sanctuary. Exod. xxvi. 33. and which was rent in the moment of CHRIST's death, to imply that all intervening obstructions, which kept the people of God from the LORD, was now done away by that death. JESUS had then removed for ever the veil spread over all nations. Isa. xxv. 6—8. Coloss. ii. 14. Hence the call to draw nigh, Heb. x. 19—23. The furniture within this veil, which was called *the holy of holies*, was, no doubt, highly significant also; but, as the Apostle's speaking of those things in full declared that he could not now speak particularly, so may we. That they were all typical, seems to be without all doubt, for *the law itself was a shadow of good things to come*. But there is a certain obscurity thrown over such things as are not immediately necessary to be known, for wise and good purposes. We can, and do, through divine teaching, behold the figure of CHRIST, in the golden *Censer*: see Rev. viii. 3, 4. and in the Ark also, there could be no other than CHRIST intended, who is to all his elect as the Ark was to *Noah*, into which the Patriarch entered by faith. Hebrews xi. 7. The *Pot* that had *manna*, which in its nature is so perishing, and yet so wonderfully preserved by this means, very strongly, and aptly represented CHRIST, preserving our nature. And the *Rod* that budded, pointed to Him, who is JEHOVAH's rod of strength, and the everlasting bud, blossom, and fruit of JEHOVAH's eternal love, to all his people for ever. Psm. cx. 2. The *tables of the Covenant*, perhaps had an allusion to God's New Testament dispensation, when God promised to write them in the living tables of the heart of his people. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 3. And the *Cherubim of glory*, could mean no other than what from the first, at the gate of *Eden*, represented the glorious Persons in JEHOVAH. Through all the word of God it is plain; the *Cherubim* could have allusion to none but the LORD. Reader! think with what a vast preparation the Gospel of CHRIST hath been ushered in; and how infinitely important, therefore, it must be? Oh! for grace, to contemplate more and more, the Person of the LORD JESUS, in whom all centre, and who is the sum and substance of all!

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then present;

in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience ;

10 *Which stood* only in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

I very earnestly beg the Reader to indulge me, with calling his attention to what is here said of God the HOLY GHOST, which, in my view, most decidedly shews, and to a demonstration, both the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the HOLY GHOST; and that it is He, who all along, from the beginning, had been the Almighty Minister in the Church of God; and now is the whole, and every part, both in the ordination, and the efficiency of it, being from, and by Him. And, as nothing can be equally important to the child of God, to be always waiting on the LORD the SPIRIT's ministry, in an age when He is so little known, and regarded, I crave permission to state what is here said, with all that attention it so loudly demands. The LORD make the statement profitable, if it be strictly consistent with his truth, to his people.

And, *first*. I desire the Reader to remark with me, the name by which the LORD the SPIRIT is here mentioned, namely, the HOLY GHOST. And let it be shewn, if it can, by any common sense argument whatever, wherefore a name, so defining personality, should be given to any one, but under the idea of a Person? The HOLY GHOST is here said to have a meaning in a certain appointment, and that appointment is fully confirming a will, design, and pleasure. The HOLY GHOST *this signifying*.

Secondly. The signification here spoken of, being in allusion to the ordinances in the sanctuary service, could have been in the appointment of none but God. The services must imply, that they were God's services. The priests and servants ministering in them, God's priests and servants; and consequently, the LORD the SPIRIT, here called by his special personal name, the HOLY GHOST, could be no other than God.

Thirdly. The HOLY GHOST thus manifesting both his Person and GODHEAD; the *former* by actions which could belong only to personality, and the *latter* in appointments of holy services, which belonged to none but God to appoint: so by those actions and appointments during the Old Testament dispensation, which began with the Church, and shadowing events, which reached to the New Testament dispensation in the days of the Gospel, and to extend to the latest Period of time most plainly, and decidedly proved, that the personal ministry; of God the HOLY GHOST, hath been all along exercised, and that he hath uniformly presided over the Church, in all ages. So that here is, in this blessed Scripture, the most full, and ample testimony, to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, of the LORD the SPIRIT.

I stay not in this place to enquire into what is here said of the HOLY GHOST's signifying by those services his divine intention. This meets us in all the shadows of his appointment, under the law, when we discover them ministering to CHRIST, who is the substance of all.

But I will in this place, with the Reader's indulgence, take one moment longer, just to add to what has been said a short observation, and which I hope will not be unsuited to the former, on the particular name, and title of God the HOLY GHOST.

Wherefore is God the SPIRIT specially, and personally, called the HOLY GHOST? I have often pondered the expression. It cannot be, with the most distant intention, of implying, any thing more holy in his nature, and essence than in the other Persons of the GOD-HEAD. The whole three Persons are One, in nature, essence, and perfections. And hence it hath been supposed, and with good reason, that the ascription of Holy, is trebled, in the hymns of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, on this account, when they cry out *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts!* Isaiah, vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. But it should seem, that this name is specially, and personally given to the HOLY GHOST, in reference to his office-character, in the special work of redemption. His office by regeneration is to quicken the redeemed, and chosen, of the LORD, from the death of sin, to a life of holiness in CHRIST. And if so, what an endearedness of character, doth it give to the souls of God's people, concerning God the HOLY GHOST? How precious doth the LORD the SPIRIT appear on this account? And what a sanctity of conduct, ought it to induce in our spirits, when we call to mind, *that our bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST which is in us?* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us.*

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

I did not detain the Reader, under the view of the foregoing verses to remark, how blessedly the HOLY GHOST, by those shadowing representations, taught the Church, that all pointed to CHRIST, and in him had their accomplishment; because I knew, that under this paragraph we should be led to the consideration of the subject again, and might therefore enter into it, somewhat more fully. The daily entrance of the Priests into the first tabernacle, and the yearly entrance of the High Priest into the second; were all typical of CHRIST,

Indeed without an eye to Him, the whole had no meaning. For what could those Priests accomplish, or what virtue, or efficacy, could there be in the blood of goats, or calves, to take away sin? But what grace is shewn, in the HOLY GHOST to the Church of JESUS to keep up such an unceasing remembrance of sin, and to hold forth, such wonders as were to be manifested, in the Person and work of CHRIST, by the sacrifice of himself.

Reader! ponder well the subject, for it is for your life. Observe, CHRIST hath obtained *eternal redemption*. And he hath entered with it, by his own blood into heaven. He hath carried it up with him there, and on the mercy-seat, the propitiatory, paid it down in the full current coin of heaven. Yea! He offered it, through the eternal SPIRIT. And he was *justified by the SPIRIT*, in the deed, by his resurrection from the dead. 1 Tim. iii. 16. And GOD our FATHER hath confirmed it still more, as *the GOD of peace*, which brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that *great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting Covenant*. Heb. xiii. 20. Oh! what strength, and energy, do those united views give, to the faith of the redeemed, when pleading these precious things, before the throne!

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

We enter at the first of these verses, on a most interesting subject, in which CHRIST is considered, as the Testator of all the blessings, purchased by him in the Covenant, for his people; and the Testament he hath made, in the blessings Covenanted for, of grace here, and glory for ever. I beg the Reader to attend to the subject, with that attention its importance demands. CHRIST hath made his Testament or Will, in which all the several legacies are mentioned, in relation to temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings; the things themselves are registered in the word of GOD; the blood of CHRIST is said to be the purchase; GOD the FATHER is pledged for the performance by word and oath; and is a party witness to the great transaction; and GOD the SPIRIT hath sealed the writings with his broad seal of heaven, in the charter of grace. So that it hath every confirmation to make it sure and binding.

But as all testamentary writings become of force after men are dead, and are of no value before, CHRIST the Testator to his Will, dies also, to give efficacy to his. And as CHRIST is both the Testator, Administrator, and Executor of his own Will; it became necessary that he should arise from the dead, and enter into glory, that he might pay all the legacies himself, with his own hand. This was strikingly set forth, under the law, by the shedding of blood; to intimate the Covenant or Testament being confirmed; and by the sprinkling the blood, to intimate the application. Indeed here were *four* distinct services, in the Old Testament dispensation of shedding of blood, as one alone could not have set forth in shadowy representations, those several grand and momentous truths, in the death of CHRIST. The *first* was that of the Passover. Exod. xii. teaching, that CHRIST, *our Passover is sacrificed for us, to deliver from the wrath to come.* 1 Thess. i. 10. But the Church of CHRIST, when in the *Adam*-state of a fallen nature, needed somewhat more than a deliverance from wrath; and therefore the atonement of sin, became the *second*, and which was also shadowed out, in the great day of the sin-offering. Levit. xvi. Here was shewn, how the Church being delivered from wrath, was also brought into a state of reconciliation, and favor, by the offering of the body of CHRIST. 2 Cor. v. 21. But we must not stop here. For even a deliverance from wrath, and an atonement for sin, to bring into reconciliation and favor, need also, a qualification in the LORD's people, to partake of those rich mercies. Our souls, while unregenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT, and unsanctified in the *Adam*-nature, are not made meet partakers, of the saints in light. Hence, a *third* service, in the *Jewish Church*, typified the great blessings, to be enjoyed from the LORD JESUS in the *Chris-*

zian; and by the service of the slaying of one bird, and the flying away of another in the air, was set forth, CHRIST giving himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word, and to present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And thus CHRIST was set forth, by the sacrifice of the one bird, that was killed over the running water; and the LORD's entrance into heaven, in his own blood was also represented by the other bird being sprinkled with blood, and being let loose in the open field. Compare Levit. xiv. 6, 7. with Ephes. v. 26, 27. And, *lastly*, as a ratification of the whole, this of the Testament, as here set forth, is in conformity to the LORD's appointment under the law. Exod. xxiv. 8.

I will only detain the Reader, with a short observation on this whole passage, just to remark, that if the LORD JESUS CHRIST, thus died, to confirm and make sure, all his testamentary gifts to his Church and people, how necessary it must be, for every one of his redeemed ones, to prove their relationship to CHRIST, by which alone they can lay claim to all the blessings of the Covenant. When CHRIST was in the full prospect of death, he instituted the Holy Supper, as a memorial to be observed by his people for ever. And as he delivered them the sacred Cup, he said; *This cup is the new testament in my blood. Take this, and divide it among yourselves.* Luke xxii. 17, 19. Nothing could more strikingly illustrate, than the original institution of *Moses* sprinkling the book, and the people, in the Old Testament dispensation, was, in direct allusion, to this of CHRIST in the New, for JESUS hath nearly made use of the same words, verse 20. It will be our mercy, if we can prove our heirship *in* CHRIST, and our relationship *to* CHRIST, for then, all the legacies JESUS hath left his Church are our own. Reader! see to it, that as the Apostle saith, you make *your calling and election sure*; for so all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, are in CHRIST, and from CHRIST; and an entrance, shall be ministered unto us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Nothing can be more satisfactory than the conviction, that CHRIST, as our great Covenant Head and Surety, hath passed into heaven itself, and is there as our Representative. So that in fact, we are there with him. So saith the HOLY GHOST by *Paul*. Ephes. ii. 5, 6. And this entrance into heaven, and sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, not only manifests the everlasting safety of his people, but also proves the perfection of his obedience and sacrifice. He needed not as those high priests, a remembrance again of sin every year. CHRIST's one offering of himself once offered, hath *perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. And it is this which every regenerated child of God is to plead before the throne continually; for it answers the whole demand of the law, silenceth all the accusations of Satan; is a satisfying reply to the alarms of conscience; and forms a full receipt to all the claims of justice. And what a blessed conclusion is made of the whole chapter. As death is the just sentence pronounced by the LORD on sin; and all men must partake of it naturally; so CHRIST by his death, took away the penal effects of death, in the spiritual and everlasting dominion of it, for all his people, and to them that look for him by faith in the full assurance of his salvation; he will assuredly appear again to call home his redeemed to himself, when he will personally come *to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe!*

REFLECTIONS.

OH! the distinguishing mercy, to which, by the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Church is brought, in exchanging a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances; for the open displays of grace, in the Person, work, blood-shedding, and righteousness of our adorable High Priest, who is the whole sum and substance of every thing blessed; and having, by his own blood, obtained eternal redemption for us, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. Precious LORD JESUS! thou art indeed the Testator of the New Testament in thy blood. Thou hast ensured all the blessings of the New Covenant to thy people. And blessed be the HOLY GHOST, in his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, for all his divine teaching, both of the old Church, in type, and figure; and the new dispensation, in sum and substance; and all of CHRIST JESUS.

LORD JESUS! let thy sweet supper for ever refresh the souls of thy redeemed, in the celebration of the New Testament in thy blood. Let it be a continual feast upon that one all-sufficient sacrifice, whereby thou hast perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Oh! let the consciousness of thy continually appearing for us, in the presence of God, keep our souls alive, in the expectation of thy coming, that we may look for thee the second time, without sin unto salvation.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter the Inefficacy of the Law, and the Sufficiency of the Gospel are stated. The LORD JESUS, is most blessedly represented, under the Spirit of Prophecy, as coming for the Salvation of his People. The gracious Encouragement, of drawing nigh by his Blood.

FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made of* sins every year.

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

I detain the Reader, at his entry on this most precious Chapter, to beg of him to remark, with me, the striking expression, which the HOLY GHOST is pleased to make use of, when he calls the Law a *shadow*. For what is a shadow? It cannot be formed, but from some substance. And the substance must be *before* the shadow. My hand, or my body, placed between the light, and the earth, forms a shadow. But on the supposition, that either be removed, no shadow remains. Now then, to apply this to the subject of these verses. The Law is said to have been a shadow of good things to come. But the very existence of the shadow, implied the pre-existence of the substance. And accordingly we find, CHRIST is said to be *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Rev. xiii. 8. Hence, therefore, the Law acted as a shadow of this substance. And very evident it is, that CHRIST was set up from everlasting, and in all things he hath the pre-eminence. But, Reader! think, if it be possible, how infinitely great must be his Person; and how infinitely momentous his redemption, introduced as both have been, in a way so wonderful, and with such vast preparation?

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of

the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

It is hardly necessary for me to inform the Reader, that these words were spoken before, under the spirit of prophecy, by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the 40th Psalm, and at least a thousand years before CHRIST's incarnation. So infinitely interested God the HOLY GHOST was, that the Church should always be on the look out for the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that from the moment of the Fall, when it was promised, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's Head, and he the Heel; every part of scripture, more or less, is engaged to celebrate the great event, and to admonish the Church with the expectation of his coming. Hence, we find the Prophets with one voice, and in the most lofty strain, speaking in raptures of the LORD's coming. The Patriarch *Abraham* saw the day of CHRIST afar off, rejoiced, and was glad. *Jacob* spake of the *Shiloh*. *David* lived, and died in the full assurance, that of his loins CHRIST should arise after the flesh. *Isaiah*, under the same divine teaching, cried out to the Church; *Behold, your God will come and save you*. *Jeremiah*, *Micah*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, yea, and all the Prophets. I stay not to quote passages from their inspired writings in proof, this would be almost endless.

But it is blessed to find the same preached in type and figure, as well as proclaimed in prophecy. CHRIST saith, *a body hast thou*

prepared me; or, as the other scripture hath rendered the phrase, mine ears hast thou opened, or digged; Psm. xl. 6. alluding to the servant in Israel, who, when offering to serve his master for ever, had his ear bored at the door post; and for the love he bore his master, and his wife and children, thereby declared himself to be his servant for ever. Exod. xxi. 5, 6. What a sweet thought the whole furnisheth! CHRIST, as GOD-Man-Mediator, having betrothed himself to our nature, becomes the Surety, and Sponsor to JEHOVAH, for the redemption of his Wife and Children, the Church. Hence he cries, Lo! I come to do thy will, O GOD! Mine ears hast thou opened! Isaiah l. 5.

I beg the Reader to pause over this blessed view, for it is blessed. Through all the Old Testament Scripture, we find the proclamation, Lo! I come. And we find the Church on the constant look out for CHRIST's coming. The Church is introduced as saying: *It is the voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.* Song ii. 8. Zech. ii. 10, 11. Hence, as the time drew nearer, we are told, that there were some who departed not from the temple night, nor day, *waiting for the consolation of Israel:* Luke ii. 25, 37. Yea, after CHRIST actually came, the message of *John the Baptist* is in proof, how universal the expectation of the LORD's people was, when the question of enquiry was worded so expressly to this individual Person: *art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* Matt. xi. 3.

But, Reader! in contemplating the LORD's coming, in the days of his flesh, for the accomplishment of redemption, let us not overlook the LORD's coming now, by the sweet influences of his SPIRIT, to make that redemption personally blessed to each soul. JESUS comes now in his word, and by his ordinances, providences, promises, manifestations; and in the many, numberless, nameless ways, by which he maketh himself known to his people, otherwise than he doth to the world. And, oh! what grace in *him*, what joy to *them*? And it must be so. For there is a mutual connection between JESUS and his people. His glory is their joy; their happiness, his pleasure. While he gives out grace, their souls are made blessed in him. And when they are everlastingly housed in his embraces in heaven; he sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. It would be always well for every regenerated child of God to have this in view, for it would give strength to his faith. When an exercised soul can say, My GOD, my SAVIOR will be glorified, when I am blessed in his salvation!

For the very delightful expressions, of the one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all, and for the vast difference between the priests under the Law, *standing* daily to minister, and CHRIST for ever *sitting down* on the right hand of God, having obtained eternal redemption for us; I refer to Chapter i. 3. where the subject is already considered.

15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before,

16 *This is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put

my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

Let the Reader particularly notice, how blessedly God the HOLY GHOST is introduced in this passage, as a witness to the truth of it. What a proof to his Being, Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry? Who but a Person can be a witness? And who less than God can witness to his own Covenant? Oh! the folly, as well as ingratitude of such men, who reject the counsel of God against their own souls! And let not the Reader, at the same time, overlook the blessed truth, to which God the HOLY GHOST bears witness. The Covenant of grace, in the pardoning of sins, is made everlastingly secure in the blood of CHRIST. CHRIST hath redeemed his Church from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her. Gal. iii. 13. And, where that redemption is, it is full, finished, and compleat. There is no more offering for sin. The sin of the Church is done away by CHRIST. How then shall there be any more offering for what doth not exist? And to this the HOLY GHOST himself is the witness. Precious truth, and precious witness, to the regenerated child of God! Jeremiah i. 20. Rom. viii. 1.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And *having* an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

These words are the conclusion to the blessed doctrine going before. And they are so sweet, so gracious, so consolatory, and encouraging to every child of God, in whose spirit the SPIRIT witnesseth, by his regenerating, soul-renewing grace, that he hath interest in the full remission of sins just before spoken of; that I cannot but beg the Reader to pause over what is said, and ponder them, one by one.

First. The persons spoken to are brethren, yea, *holy brethren*, as they are called. Chap. iii. 1. And, being one with CHRIST, and interested in all belonging to CHRIST, in his communicable grace, and glory; they are indeed holy in him. 1 Cor. i. 30.

Secondly. They are said to have *boldness*, to enter in. And this ariseth from many causes. CHRIST's oneness with the FATHER, his Suretyship-engagements also being fulfilled. His own personal entrance there, and also as our representative and forerunner, the completeness of his obedience and sacrifice, the ample reparation he hath made both to law and justice, and the reward which his Church is entitled to, by, and in him; all these, give a boldness to the whole brotherhood of CHRIST.

Thirdly. The place of entrance, namely, *into the holiest*. The Holy of Holies, in the Tabernacle, was a type of this. CHRIST is gone into heaven, which this represented. And there, by faith, we are not only commanded to follow him, but to come with boldness. For, by virtue of their oneness with him, and redemption by him, this is their final home, and their rest. JESUS declared before his return thither, that he only went before to prepare a place for them, and that he would come and receive them to himself, that where he was, there they might be also. John xiv. 3. Hence, in the lively exercises of faith upon his Person, and their interest in him, and union with him, they are expected to come with continued boldness. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Fourthly. And the way is most blessedly spoken of, in which they are to come, namely, by the blood of JESUS. Reader! do mark, how blessedly the subject riseth by gradation, higher and higher. *The blood of JESUS!* This is the sole means, by which real soul-felt communion with GOD in CHRIST, through the SPIRIT, can be carried on, and enjoyed. It is, or ought to be, the soul's daily, hourly act of faith, upon the Person, and blood of CHRIST. There can be no access, either here, or hereafter, but in, and by Him. He hath opened this way to GOD and the FATHER, by his blood. And he ever liveth to keep it open, by his intercession. Oh! it is blessed, most blessed, thus to approach. The Church in heaven, are represented as proclaiming aloud, in their hymns of praise, that this was the way they found, of access to the throne. *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* Rev. v. 9.

Fifthly. The new and living way. Not *new*, as if the Old Testament saints had not the same *good old way*. For CHRIST was set up from everlasting. And He is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. But perhaps so called, because CHRIST had, in fact, been newly slain; and his vesture, which *John* saw, dipped in blood, as if flowing then fresh from his wounds. Rev. v. 6. xix. 13. And, it is probable, moreover, it may be here called a *new way*, in distinction to the old Covenant of Works under the Law, which this

Epistle throughout had been all along shewing the incompetency of, to bring sinners to God. Now here is a *new*, and it is a *living* way; for the Law killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. And Jesus himself is *the way, the truth, and the life*. Oh! what sweetness, what blessedness, what soul-encouraging strength, are in these words, to a poor sinner, condemned in his own heart of sin?

Sixthly. It is also a *consecrated* way. Yes! *For Him hath God the FATHER sealed.* John vi. 27. Pause, Reader, over this additional argument of the most unanswerable persuasion, to come with boldness to the mercy-seat. Here is not only the blood of Jesus, to give confidence to his redeemed, in that it *cleanseth from all sin*: 1 John i. 7. but here is JEHOVAH's consecration of CHRIST; his own appointment, and authority. It is the very remedy of God's own providing. God himself is the Author, the Contriver of it. He it is, that hath sworn CHRIST into his Office of High Priest, and Mediator. So that, when a poor sinner is led this way to God, by the sweet guidings of the HOLY GHOST, he may well find boldness; because the way he comes to God in CHRIST, is not only a righteousness, and a sacrifice compleat and full, and answering to all the demands of God's righteous law; but because the remedy is God's own. How can I possibly fail, (the poor sinner may say as he comes to the throne with boldness,) when my God, and FATHER, hath himself appointed it, accepted it, and commanded me, and every poor awakened sinner, so to come?

Lastly, to add no more. What a thought is that, to every child of God, to come, in addition to all that hath been said before, when his drawing nigh is in, and through the *vail of CHRIST's flesh*. Oh! who shall speak the blessedness, or what heart here below shall conceive, the thousandth part of that endless felicity, when we consider that all our approaches to God is in, and through the human nature of CHRIST; and all his manifestations to us, are through the same medium? Even in glory, the felicity of the Church must be heightened by this cause. The brightness of celestial objects, and especially the revelations of God, in his threefold character of Person, will be softened, and tempered to our apprehensions; ripened, and made perfect, as they then will be, through the *vail of CHRIST's flesh*. And both here and there, in grace, and glory, all that our Jesus makes known to us, while they are the result of his infinite power and Godhead, will be naturally unfolded to us, to suit our capacities. Infinite, large, eternal, they will be, because CHRIST's GODHEAD gives these properties to them, and such they will continue for ever. But coming to us through the manhood of Jesus; this will so assimilate, and humanize them to our apprehension, and enjoyment, as to give a double blessedness to every manifestation, of grace here, and glory hereafter. Reader! behold then, with what strength of persuasion it is, that we are here commanded by the HOLY GHOST, when in a justified state in CHRIST, to come boldly to the throne, in the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, to grasp, and lay hold fast of our profession, and to exhort one another in it!

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

I beg the Reader's close regard to these verses, because, for want of due attention, God's dear children have sometimes, through the weakness of their faith, and Satan's temptations, been apt to mistake the Lord's meaning. The Apostle by *wilful sin*, could not be supposed to imply, the common sins, and infirmities of the brethren. *For in many things we offend all.* James iii. 2. *The just man* (that is, the justified believer in CHRIST,) *falleth seven times, and riseth up again.* Prov. xxiv. 16. Yea, *wilful sins* against light and knowledge, are not the sin which the Apostle alluded to in this scripture. Such there are in the best of men. *Paul* himself confessed, that *in his flesh dwelt no good thing.* Rom. vii. throughout. And *David* hath left it upon record, that the *transgression of the wicked said within his heart*, that there was *no fear of God before his eyes.* Psm. xxxvi. 1. Nay, the Lord's own testimony to the same solemn truth, is, that *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually.* Gen. vi. 5. And the *carnal mind*, is not only *enmity against God*; but *it is not subject to the law of God: neither indeed can be.* Let the Reader remark the strong emphasis of this latter clause: *neither indeed can be.* Rom. viii. 7. Many read this scripture as though it referred to the child of God before his regeneration. And there was a time, I confess, that I read it so too. But I bless God, since he mercifully brought me more into an acquaintance with the plague of my own heart, and his grace, that I have been taught better. I now see, that as the regeneration of the spirit doth not regenerate the flesh, the body of sin and death remains the same. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.* So CHRIST hath said. And so I know. It is only that which is *born of the Spirit is spirit.* John iii. 6. Hence, the carnal mind is carnal; neither can it be subject to the law of God, as the HOLY GHOST hath declared. And it is only by the SPIRIT, that the deeds of the body are mortified, and the soul lives. Rom. viii. 13. Hence, neither from the testimony of scripture, neither *Paul's* own personal experience, neither the experience of the Lord's people, in all ages of the Church, could *Paul* mean by this expression to allude to, in the common sins and infirmities of the brethren, whether involuntary errors, or those of a more deliberate nature.

But, it is evident by the expression itself, there is intended some one more special act of offence, in a *wilful* transgression. Let the Reader observe, it is spoken of some *one* sin, not sins. For, if we *sin* wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Hence it is plain, that it was one special, particular sin, against the commission of which the Lord the HOLY GHOST warned the Church. And when we consider to whom this Epistle was especially written, and the circumstances of that people, we shall soon discover, under the Lord's teaching, what this wilful sin was to which the Lord alluded. But, before we do this, let it be observed, that the expression itself, doth not speak as of a sin *done*, but if it *were* done. The *Hebrews* are

not charged with doing it, only cautioned against it. I beg that this also may be properly and fully attended to, in order that no false inference may be made from it, and to which the scripture itself gives not the least countenance, as if there was a possibility implied in it of finally falling away from grace.

In order to a right apprehension of this passage, let it be *first* considered, that the Apostle is here writing to the Church of the *Hebrews*; that is, to persons who were brought up in all the prejudices of Jewish ideas, and of consequence had been in the habit of observing all the sacrifices of the law. When, therefore, by regeneration, they were gathered to the LORD, and had learnt the blessed truth, that CHRIST, by the *one offering of himself, once offered, had for ever perfected them that are sanctified*; a firmness of faith in this one all-sufficient offering, ought to have kept them from having the least disposition to return to any of the sacrifices of the law. Nevertheless, as in this Church of CHRIST, made up of true believers, there were with them, as there is with *us* now, a visible professing Church also, of men unregenerated; the weak and fearful of God's people among them were tempted by such characters to suppose, that there could be no harm in observing the sacrifices of the law, and still to look to CHRIST. To prevent this, and to shew the danger of such conduct, the Apostle solemnly points out that such a wilful perversion of the truth, in looking to the shadow, now the substance was come, became virtually a denial of the full and compleat sacrifice of CHRIST for sin; and therefore *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*. I am inclined to think that this was the case in this church of the *Hebrews*; and that this was the object had in view in this Scripture. We know that it was so with the Church of *Galatia*, which was composed of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. See Gal. ii. iii. and iv. Chapters. And we know that in our own day, too many there are, who mingle law and Gospel; and but few, comparatively speaking, who live wholly upon CHRIST, as the sole cause of justification before God,

Secondly. Let it be further considered, that, in this Church of the *Hebrews*, there must have been, as there always is in the purest congregations upon earth, a number of mere nominal professors, who had no part nor lot in the matter. The real Church of CHRIST therefore, was hereby taught how to discriminate *the precious from the vile*. And this became the more necessary, because, when the after-visitation came, in the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the people of God might discover that a mere profession would not screen from the just judgment of God. This *certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation*, actually took place at the memorable siege made upon *Jerusalem*, agreeably to CHRIST's prediction, when the Roman soldiers, under *Titus Vespasian's* army, burnt the City and the Temple, and destroyed the people with the sword. It should seem therefore very plainly to be meant, that the *wilful sin* here spoken of, was that special act of considering the sacrifice of CHRIST, either not in itself sufficient for salvation, or that it might receive benefit by the addition of joining with it an attention to the sacrifices under the law. And this transgression is here pointed at, as wilfully departing from the faith, and this is done by way of preserving the real child of God from being led away by the temptation, and calling upon the Church to mark the sure de-

struction of mere *nominal* professors, in whose hearts no saving act of grace had been wrought by the HOLY GHOST.

28 He that despiseth Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses :

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

In following up the same subject, *Paul* here very strikingly reminds the *Hebrews* of the strictness of the law by *Moses*. And from thence calls upon them to consider, how much more solemn, in the final administration, must be that Gospel of *CHRIST* to which the law ministered but as a shadow? And I beg the Reader to observe the strong expression here used, of *treading under foot the SON of God, and counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith CHRIST was sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite to the SPIRIT of grace!* I would not presume to speak decidedly, but, upon the clearest testimonies of Scripture, concerning any portion of the Word of God; but I would humbly ask, is there not in these solemn words, a plain charge brought against all who are guilty of this crime, to the Person and Offices of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST? To GOD the FATHER, in treading under foot GOD's dear SON, in denying his authority, whom GOD hath appointed, and sworn with an oath into his office. Psm. cx. To GOD the SON also, in denying his GODHEAD, and counting the blood of the Covenant, wherewith *CHRIST* was sanctified by all the Persons of the GODHEAD, an unholy thing! John x. 36. John xvii. 19. Isa. xi. 2. Isa. lxi. 1. Matt. iv. 1. And to GOD the HOLY GHOST, by whom *CHRIST* wrought his miracles, and through whom he offered himself without spot to GOD, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Chap. ix. 14. And what a trembling scripture follows! *Vengeance belongeth unto me!* Here needs no comment. It is indeed *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!*

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great sight of afflictions;

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock

both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

I beg the Reader with all possible attention to observe, in confirmation of all that I have been saying, that the HOLY GHOST is all along in this Epistle comforting the Church, when drawing the line of distinction between the *real regenerated* believers in CHRIST, and mere *nominal professors*. An high flaming profession men may make, as is stated Chapter the Sixth, where there is not an atom of grace. But GOD the SPIRIT graciously teacheth his people how to estimate their different characters, by the testimonies the LORD hath given them. And I pray the Reader to observe how sweetly he comforts them, by bidding them to mark the ground, which by grace they had trodden.

But call to remembrance (saith the kind Remembrancer of JESUS) *the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great sight of afflictions.* As if the LORD had said, do ye not see, and know, the certainty of your high calling in CHRIST JESUS? Have ye not got the richest testimonies of your new-birth character? When ye were once illuminated, did ye not *desire, as babes in CHRIST, to be fed with the sincere milk of the word, that ye might grow thereby?* And though things are low with you, in the present leanness of soul, so that when ye ought to be teachers, ye have need to go over again the first principles of the Oracles of GOD; yet, *call to remembrance the former days.* There was a time, when your zeal provoked very many. Ye were made a gazing stock yourselves; and ye were companions of them that were so used. Yea, ye took joyfully the

spoiling of your goods; from the well-grounded confidence that ye then had, that if the LORD permitted the enemy to turn ye out of house and home, he would the sooner take you to himself in heaven. *Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward.* Look forward! JESUS will soon come! And in the mean time *the just shall live by faith.* As to those who draw back from a mere profession, this is, as was before known. They draw back from lip-confession only, for they never had more, Head-knowledge is no heart-renewing. Not falling from grace, for they never were in grace, but falling from natural attainments, for they never rose higher. In such, the LORD JESUS hath no pleasure. But his children, his redeemed, the gift of his FATHER, the purchase of his blood, and the conquests of his SPIRIT; *though they fall, yet not fall away, for the LORD upholds them with his hand:* Psm. xxxvii. 24. Though they faint and draw back in the day of adversity, yet *draw not back unto perdition*, for they are still of them that *believe to the saving of the soul!* Reader! what saith your personal experience to these things? Hath the LORD the HOLY GHOST regenerated you from the *Adam-fall* of a nature once dead in trespasses and sins? Can you look back to the wormwood and the gall of that fallen state? Can you call to remembrance, as the LORD here bids his people, the former days, after ye were illuminated? No man that hath passed from death to life, can be at a loss to know the saving change. True! you have cause to lament great leanness of soul. There is indeed in the best of men, but too much reason to be humbled to the dust before GOD, for the small attainments and little progress made in divine life. But the salvation of the Church doth not spring from any holiness wrought *in us*, but from the work of CHRIST wrought *for us*. Not in our brokenness of heart, but in CHRIST's *bruised and broken body on the tree.* It is indeed blessed, yea, very blessed, to feel and enjoy all the gracious effects of the precious finished salvation of CHRIST; but all we feel in the lively actings of faith, are but *effects*, and not the *cause.* He is the sole Author and Finisher of salvation. It is a sad consideration, that so many of GOD's dear children, in the present day, live below their privileges, by living upon what passeth from the work of GOD the SPIRIT *within them*, instead of living wholly upon what CHRIST *is to them*; and that their sanctification is *in Him.* John xvii. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! how blessedly hast thou manifested in thy Person, blood-shedding, and righteousness, that thou art the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and that the law was but a shadow of good things to come, which never could, neither ever was designed to make the comers thereunto perfect. Oh! for that sweet voice, *Lo! I come!* to be heard daily, hourly, in my soul, by the ear of faith, until I see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever. Come, LORD, in thy SPIRIT, in thine ordinances, thy means of grace, and open my soul to receive thee. Come, LORD, continually in the love-visits of thy mercy, until thou shalt come in the glory of thy Majesty, to take me home to thyself, that I may dwell with thee for ever!

Praised be God the HOLY GHOST for the many blessed things contained in this delightful Chapter. Yes! LORD! through thy grace enabling us, we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of JESUS. And under thy leadings and influences, thy people, are hereby distinguished, from those awful characters, in this CHRIST-despising generation, who tread under-foot the SON of God, by denying his GODHEAD, the efficacy of his atoning blood, the blood of the Covenant; and do despite unto the SPIRIT of grace. LORD! comfort thy poor little ones, in the faith, in giving them to see, their adoption-character, and that they are not of them *that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul!*

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

Here is the Record of Old Testament Saints, who lived and died, triumphant in Faith. The sweet Assurance to New Testament Believers, that they, and all the Faithful, will together be made perfect in JESUS.

NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

The Church of God can never be sufficiently thankful to the HOLY GHOST, for this most precious Chapter. It forms a compendium of the most blessed things, all leading to JESUS. The antient fathers of the Church, were accustomed to call it, the book of God's Martyrs. And to be sure, it doth contain, some of the most precious things, by which we are led to see, how it was they lived so strong in faith, and died so triumphant in hope, by the grace of God, being made perfect in their weakness. In order to enter into a proper apprehension of the blessedness of that principle of faith, in which they were made so strong by the LORD; before that we look at the effects of it in their lives, and deaths, as here recorded, it may not be amiss to attend a little more closely to the LORD's own account of faith, as stated in those words.

Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen. There is somewhat very striking in this account of faith, as given by the HOLY GHOST himself. It is called by him a *substance*, meaning; that the object the soul resteth on being substantially formed in the mind; and which, so realizeth that object to view, as for the mind to become as perfectly assured of its existence and reality, as though seen. This is faith. And in this sense, it is the *substance* of things which are at a distance; but as perfectly

alive to the soul; as though present to bodily sense. To explain great things by small. I have a child, a friend, a relation, whom I have never seen, and living at a distance from me. But I am continually receiving tokens from him by message, or by letter, both of his existence, and his affection towards me. Now, though I have never seen him, yet I no more doubt of his being and existence, than my own. I therefore substantiate, and realize in my mind, this certainty; and I am actuated by it accordingly. Such, but in an infinitely higher degree, are the great objects of faith, in relation to things supernatural, and unseen. I have received evidences upon evidences; and love tokens multiplied with love tokens from JESUS my LORD. By faith, therefore, I substantiate, and realize all those blessed things concerning JESUS. And it is to me substance. JESUS saith, *I will cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.* Prov. viii. 21. Hence, therefore, as the Apostle saith, in relation to JESUS; *Whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.* 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. It was thus with the Patriarch and holy men of old. Their faith needed not the presence of what they believed in. God's testimony concerning it was enough. It became therefore the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.

One word more concerning faith before we enter upon the blessed history, contained in this glorious Chapter, of the fruits and effects of it. Faith is the gift of God. Philip. i. 29. CHRIST is the Author and finisher of faith. Heb. xii. 2. Hence it must follow, that what is God's gift is not man's merit; and therefore the glory of faith, in the exercise of his people, is wholly the LORD's. It may perhaps appear strange to some, when I say, that I consider faith as the act of CHRIST upon my soul, more than my act of dependance upon him. Paul saith, and saith with truth, that his life of faith was not his, but the LORD's. Hear his own words. *The life (saith he) which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON of GOD.* Mark the expression. Not Paul's life of faith in the SON of GOD, but the faith of the SON of GOD. Gal. ii. 20. It is not Paul's act upon CHRIST, but CHRIST's act upon him. And how is this proved? The life of faith, like any other life, is a life of receiving, not giving. Similar to animal life, which is wholly kept up and preserved, by receiving food, air, strength. These things are received to live upon. They are incomings, not out-goings. The incomings are first received, as the cause. The out-goings are exercised as the effect. Reader! if these things are so, how doth it reduce, and bring low the pride of all our attainments? How forcibly come home the words of the Apostle, *For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

The HOLY GHOST having first established the truth of the principle of faith itself, and having shewn both the nature of it, and the operation of it, in the properties induced by it, in the lives of the faithful; now proceeds to exemplify its gracious actings, in the lives of those holy men of old, who *by it obtained a good report*. And the LORD begins with the history of the faith of *Abel*. And nothing surely can be more strong and decisive, on the subject. The faith of *Abel* is contrasted to the unbelief of *Cain*. Both brought their offerings to the LORD. But the HOLY GHOST hath marked the vast difference. *Cain* brought of the fruits of the earth, as one that considered himself a Tenant to the LORD; and no more. He thought the LORD was, as he undoubtedly is, both LORD and Proprietor of all things. And *Cain* acknowledged him as such, and brought his rent. *Abel* brought of the firstlings of his flock, and offered in sacrifice as a sinner. And the LORD had respect unto *Abel*, and his offering; but unto *Cain*, and to his offering he had not respect. Gen. iv. 3, 5. Now we should not have known, with that clearness we now do, through divine teaching, what made the vast difference, in those men, and the LORD's different acceptance of their Persons and offerings; but from GOD the SPIRIT's teaching, in this holy scripture. But when the LORD saith, that it was *by faith Abel* offered a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*, we discover the reason. *Abel* had an eye, by faith, to CHRIST the Promised Seed. *Abel* knew himself to be a sinner, sprung from the fallen race of *Adam*, and therefore came with the firstlings of his flock, in token of his conscious sin, and that he looked wholly for acceptance in the blood of CHRIST. *Cain* in his offering, had respect only to GOD as a Creator, neither confessing himself as a sinner, or as one needing a Redeemer; and, therefore, was the first Deist the world ever knew. Hence the LORD had respect to *Abel* and his offering; but to *Cain*, he had not respect. Hence also, the blessed testimony here given, by the HOLY GHOST to *Abel*, and the rejection of *Cain*. And though so many ages have passed since those events took place, yet are they still in relation before us. *Abel*, though dead, yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

To the account of the illustrious faith of *Abel*, the HOLY GHOST next brings forward his testimony to that of *Enoch*, the seventh from *Adam*, as *Jude* calls him. Jude 14. By which he meant not the seventh *Person*, or the seventh *Man*, but the seventh *generation* from *Adam*, in the line of the Promised Seed. *Adam*, *Sheth*, *Enosh*, *Kenan*, *Mahalaleel*, *Jered*, *Enoch*. See 1 Chron. 1—3. It could

not be otherwise meant, for *Cain* had a son called *Enoch*. Gen. iv. 17—25. Respecting the translation of *Enoch*, from the account here given of it by the HOLY GHOST, it is evident, that his entrance into the World of Spirits, was not by death in the ordinary way, but as *Elijah*, by translation. The LORD simply relates the fact, and bears honorable testimony to his faith. But the LORD enlargeth on what is more important for the Church to know, that such is the importance of faith, that without it, there can be no real approach to God, either in prayer, or praise, or delight, or confidence, or joy. Reader! how blessed are those who know the LORD, and *walk in the light of his countenance*. Psm. lxxxix. 15.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Going on progressively, and according to due order, in a regular succession of those holy men of old, the HOLY GHOST here introduceth to the Church the account of *Noah's* faith. I beg the Reader to attend to some of the leading features of this great Patriarch's character. He is the first concerning whom grace is recorded. The first time we meet with that blessed word in the Bible, is in the instance of Noah. And this at a time of universal corruption, when God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen. vi. 5. I desire the Reader to observe this. And I beg of him to observe no less, that *Noah* was included in the same common corruption. For, when it is added, *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*, (verse 8.) had that grace been the result of *Noah's* worth and excellency, grace would have lost its name, and grace, as the Apostle saith, *would have been no more grace*. Rom. xi. 6. This is a great point to know. And the faith of *Noah* is a confirmation of it. And if the Reader will trace the subject down from *Noah*, to the latest account of the Church, he will find one uniform history on this subject running through all. Observe the expression. *Noah found grace*. Gen. vi. 8. Where? In his own heart? No? *In the eyes of the LORD*. And hence we read what God said to *Noah*. *But with thee will I establish my covenant*. Gen. vi. 18. So that the very first mention made of *grace*, or covenant *grace* as the *cause*, and the covenant as the *effect*, are in the instance of *Noah*. And what is it but the same through all the Bible? *Thou hast found grace* (said the LORD to *Moses* in after ages,) *in my sight, and I know thee by name*. Exod. xxxiii. 17. *Fear not, Mary*, (said the Angel to her,) *for thou hast found favor with God*. Luke i. 30. *Go thy way*, (said the LORD to *Ananias* concerning *Paul*,) *for he is a chosen vessel unto me*, Acts ix. 15. The whole subject of every thing that is blessed turns on this hinge. Well, but say you, was not *Noah* a preacher of righteousness, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) and eminent by his faith, and by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith? Yes! all these things are true; and the whole are so many

blessed testimonies to the character of *Noah*. But then these are all no more than the *effects* of the first predisposing *cause*. They are all to be traced to their fountain head and source, the grace *Noah* found in the *eyes of the Lord*. This gave the bias to all that followed in the life of the Patriarch. This was the first moving and predisposing spring to all the machine. And which brings forward the Apostle's question, and carries with it, in the very bosom of the question, its own answer, *Who hath first given to the Lord, and it shall be recompensed again?* Rom. xi. 35. So universally and individually true is it said, and by the Lord himself, of every child of God, *I am found of them that sought me not*. Isaiah lxxv. 1. Reader! what is the sweet application of those precious scriptures, as the subject concerns you and me, but that *we come boldly*, in the name of Jesus, *to his mercy-seat, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*. Heb. iv. 16.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise :

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

How equally plain and blessed is the same doctrine concerning the sovereignty of grace, in the instance of the great father of the faithful, *Abraham*? For what was *Abraham*, when the Lord first called him? Surely, an idolater. And what prompted the Lord to call *Abraham*, but his own free, sovereign, and unmerited grace. Is not every thing the Lord said to this man to the same amount as to *Noah*? He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. *Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*. Gen. xv. 1. So everlastingly true is that blessed scripture by John. *If we love him*, it is because *he first loved us*. 1 John iv. 19. And all the blessed consequences resulting, in the lives and conduct of *Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob*, were the *fruits* and *effects*; and not in the smallest degree

causes, or ministering to the first great and only disposing *cause*, God's purpose, grace, and favor, leading on to the accomplishment of the end intended. Reader! it is blessed to behold the lives of the faithful, bearing testimony to God's covenant truth and faithfulness. But it is doubly blessed, to keep always in view the LORD disposing all. While the eye of the Prophet was fixed in contemplation at beholding the whirlwind from the north, and the complicated machine, wheel within wheel, moving on in endless revolvings; the whole was too deep, and too much encompassed in perplexity for his mind to understand. But, when the LORD opened to his astonished view, One, like the SON of Man above, guiding all, the LORD's glory became manifested. Ezek. i. 4—26.

It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to behold the children of God, in every age of the Church, all marked with one and the same family feature. They may be said, all of them, *to sojourn by faith in the land of promise; for all the promises are theirs in CHRIST*, by right of inheritance; 2 Cor. i. 20. and yet, every country here below is to them a strange country. Micah ii. 10. *They dwell in the midst of many people, as a dew from the LORD*, Micah v. 7. and yet *they dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations*. Numb. xxiii. 9. *They sojourn in tabernacles* which are moveable, liable, and expecting every moment to be taken down, Heb. xiii. 14. and yet *the eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*. Deut. xxxiii. 27.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

I pray the Reader to pause over these precious things contained within the bosom of these verses. *These all died in faith*. After what I have offered on the subject of faith, in the opening of this Chapter, (to which I refer the Reader,) it will be unnecessary to dwell on that feature of faith, which respects the death of the LORD's people. They died, as they had lived, in the act of believing. They substantiated things of faith. They understood the things of CHRIST, as much as though they had lived in the days of CHRIST. The

work of GOD the SPIRIT, in convincing them of their need of CHRIST, was as fully felt, and known, in the conscious plague of their own heart, as those on whom the HOLY GHOST descended, after the LORD's ascension, and return to glory. Hence, what CHRIST said of One suited and belonged to all, *Abraham saw my day afar off, rejoiced, and was glad.* John viii. 56.

And I admire the very sweet, and gracious manner of expression, the HOLY GHOST hath made use of, in proclaiming his honorable approbation of their exercise of faith. Though they all died in faith, yet, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.* Hence, in after ages, the LORD gave them this escutcheon to become their coat of arms, as in life, so in death. *They all died in faith.* This motto, marked their princely royalty. And all the faithful in CHRIST JESUS prove their relationship to the same noble family, in wearing the same crest and arms, from the herald's office of heaven.

Reader! let us not dismiss the view of those holy men of old, before that we have examined our state by their's, in the standard of faith. They all lived, and died, before CHRIST came. We all now live, since CHRIST came, finished redemption-work, and returned to glory. They saw not CHRIST in the flesh, but his day afar off. Our sight of CHRIST is the same. *Whom having not seen we love.* There is this difference, indeed, which makes their faith so illustrious, in comparison of ours: CHRIST's day to them was afar off, and many hundred years were to pass, before the fulness of time was to come, when CHRIST should appear. Had they, therefore, reasoned with flesh and blood, they might have staggered, as those now are so apt to do, which consult it, and, through unbelief, live below their privileges. But it is said of *Abraham*, in testimony of his reliance on the promise, that *he was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded, that what the LORD had promised, he was able to perform.* Rom. iv. 20, 21. We have seen the SON of GOD in our nature, accomplishing redemption by his blood; and, by the regenerating work of GOD the HOLY GHOST on the heart, every child of GOD hath, in his own person, a clear, and indisputable testimony, that CHRIST is returned to glory, and hath sent down the HOLY SPIRIT upon his redeemed, in proof thereof. Hence, Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers, are supposed to stand upon the same level, in being *persuaded* of the assurance of the promises; and having *embraced them*, and *confessed* that they are *strangers and pilgrims* on the earth. They desire a *better country*, that is, an *heavenly*: wherefore, *God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Two or three points, will square this account, and enable the Church of GOD in the present hour, to form judgment of the standard of their faith, by the lives of those holy men of old.

First. The LORD's bringing them into an acquaintance with the plague of their own heart, paved the way for the hearty and cordial reception of CHRIST, as the remedy of GOD's own providing, for the recovery of his Church from her fallen state in *Adam*. And here every child of GOD, when taught of GOD, and regenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT, knows and feels the same. The corruption of nature, and the want of grace; the workings of sin, and the powers of

divine love; a perfect conviction of a total ruin in the first *Adam*, that is, of the earth, earthy; and as perfect an assurance of a complete recovery by the Almighty salvation of the second *Adam*, even the LORD from heaven; these momentous truths, by sovereign grace, are so powerfully brought home to the heart, and so in-wrought by the LORD's divine teaching, that every child of God, both in the ages before CHRIST's incarnation, and since, have one and the same feature of character to be known by, whose they are, and whom they serve, in the Gospel of God.

Secondly. The personal enjoyment each child of God hath, of his union in CHRIST, and interest with CHRIST, becomes another testimony, in the experience of the faithful. For amidst all the coldness and weakness of the LORD's people, in the present low estate of the Church; still the LORD hath not left himself without witness, that he hath *a seed that serve him*, and which *are counted to the LORD for a generation*. There are seasons, in which Jesus doth manifest himself to his people otherwise than he doth to the world. They see him in his suitableness, in his all-sufficiency. They have bread to eat, which the world knoweth not of. And the LORD sometimes comes so near in the manifestations of his love and favor, that they smell the sweet savor of his name, and feel *a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls*.

And, *lastly*, to mention no more. The consciousness of the love of Jesus, and, as *Paul* saith, the assurance, that Jesus loved me, and gave himself for me, even when matters in ourselves are most dark, and discouraging; these lift up the souls of the faithful above all the things of time and sense, and induce a wise indifference to the mere dying circumstances around, in the blessed prospect of that city *which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. Reader! Is this the faith of God's people? And is *your* faith also?

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Most illustrious as this instance of the Patriarch's faith is, and highly to *Abraham's* honor, as God the HOLY GHOST hath recorded it; I feel constrained to pass this view of it by, in order to attend to what is infinitely more to be regarded in it; I mean, in the typical representation it was evidently intended to set forth, of the offering of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It appears from the whole history, that CHRIST, as the Mediator represented, was the visible JEHOVAH here appointing *Abraham* to this service. And in proof, let the Reader remark, that in the original history of this solemn transaction, while it is said in one verse, that God did tempt *Abraham* to the offering of his son: Gen. xxii. 1. in another it is said, that the

Angel, as God, calleth to him from heaven, and said: *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord.* Gen. xxii. 15, 16. A plain proof, that it was the Son of God in the representation of his mediator-character, in the whole of this transaction. And indeed it could be no other, for CHRIST is the visible JEHOVAH all along spoken of in the scripture. John i. 18. And the whole may serve to teach us, of what infinite importance in the sight of JEHOVAH, is that one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all, which God the HOLY GHOST was pleased to shadow forth, from the very institution of sacrifices in the garden of Eden, to the coming of CHRIST, by type and figure through all the different periods of the world from age to age, in order to teach the Church, that *without shedding of blood, there was no remission*; and that *the blood of CHRIST alone cleanseth from all sin.*

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, *leaning upon the top of his staff.*

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel: and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red-sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

I must call to remembrance the limited design of this humble work, and not indulge myself in entering upon every separate particular in relation to the actions of those illustrious champions of the faith here recorded. But otherwise I might easily shew, how strongly entrenched the Lord had made those ancient followers of the faith, in this leading, and distinguishing article, of living upon CHRIST. Surely, as *Peter* said of them, the SPIRIT of CHRIST was in them, and in all their acts, both in their public ministry, and private conversation; the two grand features of our Lord's life, and offices, they embraced with an ardor the most animated, namely, of the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory which should follow. 1 Pet. i. 11. And, both CHRIST in his Person, and CHRIST in his ministry, those holy men, by the most lively actings of faith, were living upon, and enjoying familiar communion with. All the Patriarchs, from *Abraham* to *Moses*, lived in the daily exercise of faith upon CHRIST, and his blood-shedding and righteousness. If *Moses* was hidden by his parents, it was by faith. If, conscious of his Hebrew birth by circumcision, which he could not but know, he refused to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* daughter; it was by faith. If he esteemed CHRIST, despised Egypt, kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood; the whole was by faith. All, and every act, became an act of faith, by which the lives and deaths of those blood-bought, royal sons of God, were so distinguished; and for which, the HOLY GHOST hath handed down their names with such honorable testimony, in the word of God. Hence *Jacob*, when a-dying, exulted in the Covenant love, and grace of GOD in CHRIST, and cried out: *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.* Hence, *Joseph*, in the hour of death, looked to *Canaan*, as the sure spot, where CHRIST in after ages should come; and said, there let my bones be carried. And *Moses*, in his last farewell to *Israel*, sung his song concerning Him, *my dweller in the bush.* Deut. xxiii. 16.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again : and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment :

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy : they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

It were to hold the small taper of the night to the sun, to offer any observations upon what is included within these verses. Indeed, any Comment would do injury to the beautiful simplicity which runs through the whole of what the HOLY GHOST hath said. Every verse, yea, every line, manifests what an energy the whole must have acted under, when their faith induced such wonders, and by which such an holy perseverance was kept alive, under CHRIST, the great Author and Finisher of faith, in such soul-living expectations. *They received not the promises.* No ! They needed them not in hand. They lived on them by faith. They had the same thing, namely, the assurance of them. And, Reader ! this is the most blessed, and distinguishing feature of faith, when, in the absence of the promise, the faithful can, and do live upon the promising God. Oh ! it is blessed, when at any time matters are dark, and discouraging, still to hang upon God the Almighty Promiser ; when it is too dark even to see the promise itself, or to see how the LORD will accomplish it. The faithful follower of the LORD hath nothing to do with either. It is enough that the LORD hath said it. And the child of God will say, it is the LORD's concern, and not mine, how he will bring it to pass. In short, the blessedness of the promise itself, and the assured faithfulness of the Promiser ; these are all in which the faithful are concerned. And, in every trying moment of the faithful, he hears the same Almighty Speaker calling upon him, to the same effect as the LORD did to the Patriarch of old : *Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward.* Gen. xv. 1. Reader ! can you set your Amen to these truths ?

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of his sacred Word, for this precious Chapter, which he hath so graciously given to the Church of GOD. Oh! for the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath so freely caused such illustrious acts of his people to be recorded for the consolation of the faithful, to bless it to the faithful, whenever, and wheresoever the LORD causeth it to be heard, or read, in all the Churches of the saints. And oh! that amidst all the awful circumstances of the present awful day, when, if the SON of GOD should come, the question of our LORD might be put forth, with trembling apprehensions for the answer; *will He find faith in the earth?* oh! grant that there may be known by our LORD, though hidden from our imperfect view, *a remnant according to the election of grace, both sons and daughters, who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal!*

LORD JESUS! thou Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! do thou increase our faith! Surely, LORD! the gift is thine; faith is thine. As none can first quicken, so none can keep alive his own soul. And, as none can first create faith; so none can exercise it, but by thee. *All our fresh springs are in thee.* Yea, LORD! Is not faith itself thine act in the soul, and the whole result of thy grace upon the heart? Precious JESUS! make thy redeemed now strong in the grace that is in thyself; that we may be *the followers of them, who inherit the promises.*

Almighty FATHER! All the triumphs of faith begin in thy fatherly love. Thy choice of the Church in CHRIST, and thy gift of the Church to CHRIST, become the surest testimony of thine everlasting love, which time, or eternity can shew. Oh! then, let a sense of it silence for ever all the natural Atheism, and unbelief, thy children bring with them into the world, from the *Adam-nature*, in which we are all born. Oh! gracious God and FATHER! let thy children stand impressed with an unshaken, and steady assurance, that thou hast not called thyself I AM, for nothing; but that the very name, by which thou hast been pleased to be made known to them, becomes a confirmation of all thy promises. I AM will give both a being, and an accomplishment, to all he hath said. Amen. Oh! then, like those holy men in CHRIST gone before, grant that thy people may all live, and when called upon, all die, in the faith of GOD's elect. And both in life and death, in time, and to all eternity, bless the united Source of all their mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever! Amen.

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

The opening of this Chapter contains an earnest and an affectionate Exhortation to the Church, from the View of the Faithful, which had been given in the preceding Chapter, to be stedfastly looking unto JESUS. To this succeeds a striking Account of the Difference between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

WHEREFORE, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of wit-

nesses, let *us* lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Surely, there never was a more persuasive *wherefore*, neither a more powerful motive to what the HOLY GHOST hath here recommended, by his servant the Apostle to the Church, than in following up the history given before of the faithful Patriarchs in the preceding Chapter, with holding forth the glorious Person of CHRIST in this; and making JESUS what He really is, the whole of all arguments, and the sum and substance of every persuasion to a faithful life. Precious LORD JESUS, I would say, be it my portion so to look to thee, so to behold thee, so to hang upon thee with my whole heart, and soul, and affections, as the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *first* and the *last*, and not only the Author and Finisher of faith, but the Author and Finisher of salvation; yea, salvation itself, in all its blessedness, for time, and for eternity!

And, Reader, I pray you to pause with me over these words, and consider their beauty. A *cloud of witnesses* we are said to be encompassed with. And let it be remembered, that they are God's witnesses, which are the most honorable of all witnesses. They witness to God the FATHER's faithfulness, in his everlasting love to the Church. They witness to the Person, GODHEAD, Offices, characters, relations, redemption-work, and finished salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And they witness to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, in the regenerating, soul-quickenings, soul-sustaining, and soul-comforting influences of God the HOLY GHOST. Surrounded, therefore, with the testimony of others, and enabled by grace to give in our own, to those grand and momentous truths; the LORD is looked unto to strengthen them in their Christian warfare, and to lay aside the besetting sin of unbelief, which cleaves to all men by nature, until grace gives them new minds, and new hearts, to receive God's testimony of himself, and to run with patience the race that is before us; eyeing JESUS in every step of the way. And, oh! the blessedness of thus *seeing* the SON by faith, and *believing* on him! John vi. 40. Seeing him, as *One with the FATHER over all*, God *blessed for ever*, Seeing him as the CHRIST of GOD, the Sent of GOD, the Sealed of GOD, *full of grace and truth*. And, in this blessed view of beholding JESUS, when He, who is the Author and Finisher of faith, gives faith, to believe the record God hath given of his dear SON. The regenerated child of GOD beholds him, and accepts him on his bended knees, in holy joy and rapture, as JEHOVAH's one, and only one appointment and ordinance of salvation, on whom the soul may rest secure, for all the peace and happiness of the life that now is, and that which is to come. Reader! just pause to ask your own heart, are you so looking to JESUS? Is He, in your view, both the Author and Finisher of

faith? Many there are, who seem very willing to make him the *Author*, but feel somewhat reluctant to accept him as the *Finisher*. And what is this but pharisaical pride? I humbly conceive, such men, if under divine teaching, might soon learn the danger of this error. Let them ask themselves this one simple question, How did I first look to Jesus? Was it not as a poor, helpless, friendless, needy, self-condemned sinner? And have I any thing of my own now, to recommend me any otherwise? Let this question be fairly applied to the heart, under divine teaching, and sure I am there will not be a child of God upon earth, if truly taught of God, but what will be then as ready to make Jesus as much the *Finisher* as the *Author* both of his faith and salvation.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected *us*, and we give *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure: but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees:

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

There is somewhat truly blessed in what is here said of the LORD JESUS. What joy could be set before him which could increase his own joy, in the glories of his own essential power and GODHEAD? And if it be meant, the joy of giving everlasting happiness to millions, in giving them a Being in himself, and a blessedness of being in himself abstracted from all personal interest, what a view doth it give of the love of CHRIST? Moreover, when we are enjoined by the HOLY GHOST to consider *Him*, in order to prevent our becoming faint under exercises, what an argument ariseth herefrom, to give confidencé to the soul, in the consideration, that as *He was, so are we in this world*. And the argument runs thus: If JESUS, for our sakes, endured such things against himself, what ought we to endure, if needful, for ourselves. Oh! who shall count the contumacy, reproach, and scorn, which the SON of GOD sustained, in his Person, Offices, and characters, when he became man for our salvation? How sweetly the Apostle argues from it in the next Chapter, *to go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach?* Chap. xiii. 13. And how sweetly he adds to this argument another; in that, though some of them might, and would be called to suffering, yet hitherto they had not. Reader! there is nothing so truly accommodating, to bring a child of GOD into a blessed frame of mind, when at any time exercised with sufferings, as the consciousness of CHRIST's sorrows. The path is made sacred, which we are called upon to walk in, when we behold the footsteps in it of the LORD JESUS, and those footsteps marked with blood.

There is somewhat very affectionate and endearing in the application of that passage from Prov. iii. 11. to the cases of the LORD's suffering family. The character of a father, in the tenderness of one, is happily chosen, to represent *the FATHER of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort*. And the contrast, to the case of bastards, who are disregarded by their father, as being ashamed to own children unlawfully begotten, is as striking, to set forth the vast difference, between the children of the bond-woman, and the children of the free. Reader! it is astonishing to observe, what a decided, and marked attention, is uniformly observed through all the Bible, by way of shewing the Church, the delight the LORD takes, to mark the precious from the vile; and to instruct the Church, how to know *him that serveth GOD, from him that serveth him not*.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;

I wish the Reader to look at this verse by itself, as so much perversion hath been made of it, that it demands this attention. *Follow peace with all men*. What peace? If it be supposed to mean the peace of GOD in CHRIST, or CHRIST himself, who is our Peace; this cannot be a mere precept directed to all men; for all men have not faith; neither do all men follow peace, or CHRIST: neither is this scripture addressed to all men; but to the Church, who are supposed

to be following CHRIST, in the regeneration. *And holiness.* What holiness? Not, as some have supposed, holiness in the creature, for there is none holy, no, not one. And moreover, it would be in this sense, a precept to *follow it*, and not as if possessing it. The latter part of the verse, in my view, explains the whole, when it is said, *without which, no man shall see the LORD.* Now, the uniform language of scripture is, that without CHRIST, there can be no peace with God; neither any approach to God, but in the holiness of JESUS. *No man*, saith CHRIST, *cometh to the FATHER but by me.* John xiv. 6. And our entrance into the holiest, is by the blood of JESUS; and in him we have boldness to enter. Heb. x. 19, &c. CHRIST, therefore, is our peace, by the blood of his cross; and *through him we have access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER.* Coloss. i. 20. Ephes. ii. 18. Hence, the Church, (and it is the Church all along in this Epistle which is spoken to,) is called in one whole body to follow CHRIST, who is both the peace, and the holiness of his people; and *without which, no man shall see the LORD.* 1 Cor. i. 30. Heb. vii. 26.

15 Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

In these verses we have the Church called upon, to behold the safety of the Lord's people, by looking at the contrary character, in such as have not, neither ever had, the grace of God. Here is an earnestness recommended to the faithful, to look diligently in their assemblies among the mere professors, which form, to public view, part of the visible Church, but in reality do not, neither ever did belong to it. Such are of the bitter root, which, by springing up, and mingling with the true seed, like weeds in a garden, defile what is pure. And the case is instanced, in the history of *Esau*, who is here called a profane Person, that is a reprobate. Malachi i. 3. And this reprobation is accounted for, in despising his birth-right, which included CHRIST. Hence his rejection by the LORD. And what was it he sought carefully with tears? Not CHRIST, and the promised blessing in him, but the *earthly* blessing, which his father had settled upon his younger brother, in making him his lord. This was what he sought carefully with tears, hoping, by his exceeding bitter cries, to prevail upon his father to revoke this gift given to *Jacob*. And which, indeed, though not revoked, he obtained, when *Jacob* soon after, was obliged to flee for his life, from his fury; not returning again for many years. But the blessing of spiritual mercies in CHRIST, even the promised seed, *Esau* neither sought for, nor

regarded. Hence, it is said, *he found no place of repentance*; or, as the margin of the Bible more strongly expresses it, *no way to change his mind*; though he sought it carefully with tears. Let the Reader turn to the history, Gen. xxvii. throughout. Gen. xxvii. 5. Reader! behold the repentance of *Esau, the worldly sorrow*, as an Apostle calls it, which *worketh death*; and learn to distinguish it from that sorrow, which is after *a godly sort*, and which worketh life. The *one*, the effects of nature; the *other* the fruits of grace; the one man's labours the *other* God's gift. *Esau's* and all like *Esau's*, ending in despair; *Jacob's*, and all the spiritual seed of *Jacob's*, leading to CHRIST, and life in him eternal. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 11.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

Within the compass of these verses, we have the most striking description drawn, and by the pencil of the HOLY GHOST himself, of the vast difference, between Mount *Sinai*, and Mount *Zion*; that is, the law, and the Gospel; a Covenant of Works; and a Covenant of Grace. And it is such a description, as is enough under divine teaching, to arrest the heart, with the most sensible apprehension, of the awfulness of the *one*, and the blessedness of the *other*; in the soul's approaches unto God.

The first account is of Mount *Sinai*. And the very solemn and awful demonstrations, of the Lord's presence, in giving the law; are described in characters so terrible, as even in the recital, makes the flesh to tremble. *Moses* himself, was so overwhelmed, that he said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*. And all *Israel* cried out, and said unto *Moses*, *speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die*. Exod. xx. 18, 19. Nothing can be more plain, than that the leading design of the Lord, in those manifestations, of thunderings, and lightnings, and the like, were to impress the Church of God, with an holy awe and reverence, in the consciousness of the divine presence. And also to shew them, the blackness, darkness, dread, and horror, which every soul must feel, through divine teaching, when brought under the conviction of having broken the Lord's precepts.

And, on the other hand, in the most blessed and gracious description, given of Mount *Zion*, the Church is taught the high privilege of the Lord's redeemed ones, who now may come, and who indeed do come, to the assembly of the first-born; yea, to God himself *the Judge of all*, when coming in the name of *Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling*. And here is implied, in being come, that there is an holy familiarity, and acquaintance, in this approach; a birth-right, by the new-birth; a redemption, an adopted-character, by *Jesus's* blood, and righteousness; and the Covenant faithfulness of God the Judge of all. So that this is the Gospel privilege of God's redeemed ones: their stated daily, hourly, minutely mercy; to which they are supposed to come boldly, and find mercy, and grace to help in all time of need. Heb. iv. 16.

One point I would beg however to remark, on this different description of those Mounts, in the dispensation of the Law and the Gospel. The HOLY GHOST hath most graciously and blessedly taught the Church, in this divine scripture, from the different manifestations in which the Lord was pleased to make himself known to Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers; how blessed an alteration is made, in the mode of worship, by the open revelation of CHRIST; but it must not be understood from thence, that the way of acceptance with God in CHRIST, differed in the Old Testament Church from the New. Both were one, and the same. The former, was a shadow of good things to come; but then, as now, the body was CHRIST. And blessed be God, our fathers, both under the Law, and before the Law, as well as their children under the Gospel, in every ministration, and in every service, had an eye to the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Their services, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, yea, the Book of the Law, and all the people, were sprinkled with blood. Exod. xxiv. 6, 7, 8. Heb. ix. 19—22. And hence we find Old Testament saints chaunting their hymns of salvation to God, and the LAMB. *Job* knew, that his kinsman Redeemer lived. Job. xix. 25. *David* sung his dying love song, in the believing views he had, of a Covenant ordered in all things and sure; and which was *all his salvation, and all his desire*. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. And indeed, all the faithful, in every age of the Church, from the first dawn of revelation, in *Abel's* faith offering, down to *Zachariah's* day at the Altar of Incense, in the moment of CHRIST's coming, blessed God, in the soul-living expectation of the mercy

promised. Luke i. 72. Reader! learn to estimate, the high privileges of redemption in JESUS; and be it your daily song of thanksgiving, and praise, that you are not come to the Mount that might be touched, (that is, on which the LORD by his descent might be said to touch, though not touched by man,) and that burned with fire; but you are come to JESUS the Mediator; and to the blood of sprinkling! Oh! the blessedness, the preciousness, the unspeakable greatness of the mercy! To JESUS, your JESUS, if so be you have tasted that the LORD is gracious; to whom coming. 1 Pet. ii. 3, 4. And in, and through, and by JESUS; to GOD the Judge of all.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth; much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

What solemn, but yet soul comforting views, are here given of CHRIST? In order to impress upon the Church, the vast, and infinite importance of hearing CHRIST, (which GOD the FATHER more than once gave such testimony concerning, accompanied with this express command; *hear ye him.* Matt. xvii. 5.) the HOLY GHOST, hath in these verses, first drawn a line of eternal distinction, between CHRIST and Moses; and then shewn, somewhat of the outlines of the SON of GOD, in our nature, in testimony both of his eternal Power and GODHEAD; and of his office-character, as GOD-Man-Mediator. I beg the Reader's close attention for a few moments to this subject.

First. The line of eternal distinction between CHRIST and Moses. The LORD the SPIRIT calls Moses the man on earth. They escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth. CHRIST, as is elsewhere declared, is the LORD from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 47. And John the Baptist hath given a blessed testimony to the same, when speaking of himself, in comparison of his LORD. *He that cometh from above saith John, is above all. He that is of the earth is earthly; and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the CHRIST, but that I am sent before him.* John iii. 28, 31.

Secondly. Look at the outlines, drawn of the SON of GOD in this scripture; and may the Almighty Author of such a delightful scripture, make it blessed to our view, whose voice then shook the earth. When was this? In order to answer the question, when was this, that his voice shook the earth; we must read Haggai's prophecy, in the second Chapter, from verse the fifth to the seventh; from whence

this quotation by the Apostle is made. *According to the word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt so my SPIRIT remaineth with you; fear not. For thus, saith the LORD of hosts, yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.* Reader! pause. Here is the LORD of hosts, the same LORD, which covenanted with his people when they came out of *Egypt*, declaring that his love, was still with his people, and his SPIRIT remaining with them. He then declares, that when *the desire of all nations* should come; which is a well-known name, and character of himself, he would shake the heavens and the earth; meaning the hearts and minds of his people, by the sovereignty of his grace. And here in this scripture, the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle refers this sovereign act of grace, to the same Person as shook the earth, when he came down on Mount Sinai. *Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.* Hence it must be inferred, by the plainest, and most palpable evidence, that it was the SON of God, in his representative character of Mediator, which then shook the earth, who in the prophecy of *Haggai* declares he will again shake, not only the earth, but the heavens. The phrase *Once more and again*, hath a most decided reference to the same, or similar act, having been done *before*. And nothing can be more evident, than that both were the deeds of one, and the same Person. In the relation of that solemn scene at Mount Sinai, we are told, that the LORD descended upon it in fire; that the whole Mount quaked greatly; that when *Moses* spake; God answered him, by a voice. *Exod. xix. 18, 19.* And the LORD bid the children of Israel by *Moses*, to observe those tokens of his presence. *Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Exod. xx. 22.* How very clear then is this blessed portion of the HOLY GHOST by *Paul*; that the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is the Almighty LORD, which is spoken of in both scriptures. Indeed, who should it be, but Him? He, and He only, is the visible JEHOVAH, in all revelations made to man.

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. Oh! ye deluded miserable men, who deny the GODHEAD of CHRIST! What can possibly prevent the awful consequences prophesied of an heresy so awful, living and dying, in the hardened state of unbelief. Some of God's children indeed have been found, led away by the temptations of Satan and long in this state, whom sovereign grace hath recovered. Should the LORD, in his mercy, direct the eyes of such an one, to this blessed scripture; and carry conviction from it to his heart, to the acknowledging of the LORD that bought him: Oh! the greatness of the blessing, in recovering all such from the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. *Kiss the SON! lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psm. ii. 12.*

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we

may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear;

29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

In relation to the first of these verses, let the child of God take to himself all the comfort the HOLY GHOST designed the Church, from the assurance of belonging to an immoveable kingdom, amidst all the moveable and dying circumstances of every thing here below. And let him take to himself the further comfort, that this kingdom, and the interest in it, he hath *received*, not for merit, neither working, but from the free gift of God. This sweet scripture saith to the Church, that it is *receiving* a kingdom, which cannot be moved. All the blessings connected with the subject confirm it. *Fear not*, (saith JESUS to his people,) *little flock, it is your heavenly FATHER's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Luke xii. 32. And how fully all the scriptures of our God, bear testimony to the same. The kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory, are both originating in the FATHER's love by gift; in receiving all the blessings for time and eternity, from the fulness that is in CHRIST JESUS; being brought into an happy, and blessed participation, by the HOLY GHOST. Well therefore might the Apostle add; *let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.* Let us have it? But how? By receiving it, as we receive the kingdom, which is immoveable. The citizenship to this kingdom, ensures all the privileges of it. We already have it in CHRIST our head; and from him, we are brought into the enjoyment of it, from day to day.

The last of these verses, and with which the Chapter ends; is a striking one indeed. None more so in the Bible. It hath been commonly paraphrased by saying, God *out of* CHRIST is a consuming fire. But this according to my apprehension, is an unwarrantable alteration of the word; and not strictly true. It is very certain, that without an eye to CHRIST, we could have no more to do with God in the essence of his divine nature alone, than with a devouring fire. Exod. iii. 6. But we have no authority, from all eternity, to consider JEHOVAH, but in CHRIST. 2 Cor. v. 19. And all the Persons of the GODHEAD are included, in this mysterious union. The figure therefore of fire, is here evidently meant to express God's nature, and essence, as He is in himself; and in his threefold character of Person; in which God the SON, as God, is as inaccessible without a Mediator, as either the Person of the FATHER, or of the HOLY GHOST. Upon so solemn a subject, I presume not to speak, but with the greatest humility and reverence; but I venture to conceive, that the HOLY GHOST was pleased by this expression, after the many blessed and gracious things which he had been bringing before the Church, in the former part of this Chapter, to shew the vast privileges in CHRIST. And as such, nothing could impress the mind of the LORD's people so solemnly, as the sacred truth with which the Apostle hath closed; *For our God is a consuming fire.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! hear what God the SPIRIT saith to the Churches! Behold what animating prospects are opened to New Testament saints, in the

contemplation of Old Testament believers. And while we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, O LORD the SPIRIT! do thou give thy people grace, to pass on through all besetting difficulties, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace, to consider, and very blessedly to improve, under the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, in marking what a contradiction of sinners, thou didst endure against thyself: LORD! who can faint when beholding the SON of GOD, in his unequalled conflicts? Surely, if JESUS learned obedience, by the things which he suffered, well may his brethren desire to be trained in the same school. Then will they know their sonship, and be sanctified under the hand of a tender FATHER. Let the *Esaus*, and the profane persons of every age, relinquish, as they always do, the blessing; but, LORD, let no root of bitterness, spring up to trouble thy *Jacobs*, and the *Israel*s thy people.

Blessed be GOD, that Mount *Sinai* is no more; but the Church is come to Mount *Zion*. There may thy people, O LORD, daily come. There are the first-born. There the assembly of the faithful. There JESUS, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling. And there GOD the Judge of all. And, LORD, while through thy grace, thy people come to thee in faith; do thou help them to look forward to thy coming to them in glory. JESUS will shake both heaven and earth. But JESUS's redeemed belong to Him and in Him they receive a kingdom, which cannot be moved. Precious LORD! grant all thy grace, to serve GOD acceptably, *with reverence and godly fear*.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

The Epistle is here closed; and a Blessed Conclusion is made. CHRIST in his Person, Relations, and Character, the same for ever. Several weighty Exhortations are used; and the whole is summed up in praying for grace to the whole Church.

LET brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge.

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

This Chapter opens with some very engaging exhortations, arising out of the foregoing doctrines. And, first, of the brotherly love, a members of CHRIST's body, and brethren in the faith. For as the Church, in heaven and earth, is but one, so CHRIST's love to each and they to one another, should be formed upon his standard. From the love of the brethren, the Church is next directed to regard strangers; simply as strangers, and from the case of *Abraham's* entertaining the heavenly Guests he did, an inducement is made that the Church should give kind reception to strangers, under the hope that there may be some of God's dear children among them, and a such, well known to Him, though unknown to them. Gen. xviii. 2 and 19. 1—3. To this precept succeeds another, namely, of tenderness to those in bonds; not merely prisoners in the body, but bondage frames of soul. And indeed in the times in which the Apostle lived, there were opportunities for the exercise of compassion to both. Then follows a very delightful observation on the marriage-state. And as all marriages of honor, and undefilement are evidently typical of CHRIST's marriage with his Church; it is very blessed, to hear the HOLY GHOST, thus continually approving of it. And this paragraph closeth with arguing the weakness of an over anxiety for the things of the body, when God by his Covenant promise, hath made such ample provision, for his redeemed, in the engagement first given to *Joshua*, and in him to all the Lord's people Joshua i. 5. I do not enlarge on these different subjects, being in themselves so plain, as to need no comment.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation:

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

It is truly interesting to behold, more or less, in every Epistle, what affectionate recommendations, are given to the Church, to be attentive in all the tokens of love and regard, to the Pastors, whom the Lord had set over them; and on the other hand, how much the truly ordained Servants in the ministry are called upon to distinguish themselves, from mere hirelings, by a careful watching over, and tenderly feeding the flock. And do observe, Reader, in this in

stance now before us, how much stress is laid upon the Church's following the faith of their Pastors. A thing taken for granted, that they are not only *speaking* to their people, the word of God, but eminently *living* in the practice of it. And what a lovely sight, when the Pastor and People are striving together for the faith of the Gospel. But I beg the Reader also, in this account to observe, what is said, concerning the end of the Pastor's conversation, namely, JESUS CHRIST. If the Reader be particular to notice, he will see, that the words of one verse run into the other. The end of their conversation is, JESUS CHRIST. A plain proof, that the HOLY GHOST will have no other subject in his Church. Every thing centers itself in JESUS CHRIST. He that is the first and last in JEHOVAH's thoughts, is, or ought to be, the beginning and end of every faithful minister's conversation. See a beautiful picture of this, in the early Church, Acts v. 42. and Acts viii. 5.

Pause over the short, but comprehensive statement, which GOD the HOLY GHOST, hath in this verse given of the LORD our RIGHTE-
OUSNESS, JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever!* Every word is big with importance; and to dwell upon each might fill volumes. *First.* His name, JESUS. A SAVIOR! for so the name imports. And whether considered in the GODHEAD of his nature and essence, as *one with the FATHER, over all, God blessed for ever;* or whether, in his twofold nature, as GOD and Man, Mediator; every way, and in all things, he is a SAVIOR, and expressly called JESUS, on that account; *for he shall save his people from their sins.* Matt. i. 21. Reader! beg for grace to be continually meditating on the sweet savor of his name, JESUS; that a name, which perfumes all heaven, may give continually fragrancy to the Church upon earth; and be in every believing heart, as the savor of the richest ointment poured forth. Song i. 3.

Secondly. He is not only JESUS, but JESUS CHRIST; that is, the anointed, sent, and sealed, of the FATHER, *full of grace and truth.* Reader! this is a most blessed, and interesting part of his name. JEHOVAH's name, and JEHOVAH's authority is in him, and with him. CHRIST glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest, but *was called of God, as was Aaron.* Heb. v. 4, 5. And what a warrant such a view of the LORD JESUS gives, to the fullest exercise of every believer's faith and hope; when he not only goes to the throne of grace here below, but will hereafter stand before the throne of judgment above, in the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and also in the way of God's own appointing, the salvation he himself hath sent is his dear SON. Oh! the blessedness of that scripture, which Old Testament saints used; and which is the same strength to the faith of New Testament believers; *Behold! O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed.* Psm. lxxxiv. 9.

Thirdly. JESUS CHRIST *the same.* Yes! Every circumstance belonging to his Person, Offices, Characters, Relations, Royalties, faithfulness to God, to man, love to his Church, and people; all partake of this everlasting sameness. He is the same *yesterday.* What yesterday? In all the eternity past. Set up from everlasting in his Mediator character. Prov. viii. 23. *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. *To-day.* What day? Nay,

the whole day of the World's continuance in the time-state of the Church. *And for ever?* That for ever, which God the FATHER hath marked, when he said to him: *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!* Psm. xlv. 6. Heb. i. 8. Reader! pause over the wonderful account, and ponder well the sameness of his Person, his love, his grace, and all the unchangeableness of his GODHEAD, Mediator-character, and offices; *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Never will a child of God be in danger of being carried away with divers, and strange doctrines, whose heart is established in the grace of the HOLY GHOST, having been regenerated, and taught by Him, who CHRIST is, and the everlasting unchangeableness in all that relates to his Person, and Character. LORD JESUS! thou Great Author, and Finisher of faith! do thou, in the present awful day of a CHRIST-despising generation, take to thyself thy great Name. Establish, confirm, and strengthen all thine own, in this most glorious truth; that no change of time, nor change of men, nor change of worlds, may shake them from this faith! LORD! be thou to them in time, what thou art, and will be, to all eternity; JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus, also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good, and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

There is but one Altar which the Church of CHRIST knoweth, and that is a precious Altar indeed; namely, CHRIST himself. It was on this Altar even his divine nature, the LORD JESUS offered himself to God, through the Eternal SPIRIT. Heb. ix. 14. CHRIST is our New Testament Altar, and our Sacrifice, and our High Priest, and the Sacrificer. Now they can have no right, neither benefit, in this Altar, or Sacrifice, and Sacrificer, who are looking to any sacrifice beside. And not only are they prohibited from any right to this our Altar, who serve the *Jewish* Tabernacle; but any *Christian* Taber-

nacle, falsely so called, that is, they who *sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag*: Heb. i. 16. and, according to the Prophet, are building themselves up in their own fancied righteousness, and making CHRIST only a part SAVIOR with themselves.

This is a beautiful illustration of the Old Testament service, and which at once proves, that the whole of the ministry, on the great day of atonement, related but to CHRIST. Let the Reader first read the account of the appointment, as minutely related; Levit. xvi. and he will be struck with the type, in its close resemblance to CHRIST. JESUS did all this in substance, as the High Priest then did in the shadow, in the day when he suffered without the gate, that is, without *Jerusalem*, on the Mount *Calvary*. And, as the bodies of those beasts, whose blood was brought into the Sanctuary by the High Priest, for sin, were burnt without the Camp: Levit. xvi. 27. so CHRIST, in his own Person, endured the fiery indignation of sin, as the Church's representative; and then went by his own blood into heaven itself, *there to appear in the presence of God for us*. Heb. ix. 11, 12. And what a most affectionate exhortation the HOLY GHOST adds to this beautiful illustration, when he invites the Church, to go forth, from the observance of all self-offerings whatever; from the camp of the world, and from all vain things, of any fancied attainments of our own; seeking acceptance wholly in the Person, and finished salvation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? This will indeed bring reproach; but it is CHRIST's reproach, being for his sake, and on his account. This would be doing good in the only way, in which the child of God, regenerated by grace, can do good; namely, communicating to others, by our word, and by our example, that CHRIST is our all, and in whom we depend for all. *With such sacrifices God is well pleased*. Yes! For the child of God, who dares in such a day as the present, amidst a CHRIST-despising generation, openly to avow, that he is looking wholly to CHRIST, and that he makes CHRIST his all, for life and salvation; must sacrifice both name and reputation, and sometimes many earthly comforts besides, in the connections, and relationships of natural life. And from no class whatever will he find greater bitterness manifested, than from modern Pharisees, who profess to honor CHRIST as well as he, in giving him the glory of the *procuring cause* of salvation; but contend, that what CHRIST hath done, and suffered, is not a finished salvation, but that our sincere repentance, and obedience, and faith, may on CHRIST's account be accepted of God. Alas! did those men but seriously consider, how wretched at the best, are all the performances of creatures such as we are, they would discover what a flimsy thing the sincerity, and obedience, and repentance, yea, faith itself, considered as an act of ours, must be to trust in, when going in before God. Wretched indeed would be my guilty soul, if an atom of mine became necessary for acceptance in that solemn hour!

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account: that they may do

it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Still harping upon the pleasant string of brotherly love, we have here the same sweet notes sung over again, of the people's duty to their ministers, and the affectionate request of the ministers to their people, to be by them remembered in their prayers. And what a lovely sight, to behold the aged Apostle *Paul*, seeking from the Church as a boon, what, from his voluntary, and unrecompensed labors, he might have justly demanded as a tribute. Oh! the happiness of that Church, where minister, and people, are wrestling together in prayer, before the LORD, for each other? What spiritual blessings may not be expected from such an harmony of souls, knit together as one in CHRIST?

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

As the Apostle had begged an interest in the prayers of the people; so here, in concluding his Epistle, he looks up in prayer for the Church, and pours forth his earnest supplications for the people. But I beg the Reader to observe some of the several weighty things by which he mentions his desires, for a blessing on the Church. He calls God *the God of peace*. This is a blessed title, and comes with peculiar energy, after the many precious proofs the HOLY GHOST had given the Church, in this Epistle, of God's being at peace with his redeemed, in the blood of the cross. And the bringing CHRIST again from the dead, as *the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood, of the everlasting Covenant*; is specially mentioned, I should humbly conceive, on purpose to shew, that CHRIST had made our peace by that blood; and God's Covenant promises of peace, were all included in that high administration. Reader! pray mark this in the deepest memorandums of your life. Beg of God the HOLY GHOST to mark it, with his deep impressions, on your heart; for the testimony of it is sweet. Never would the LORD have taken to himself so precious, and blessed a name, as it concerns his Church; had not CHRIST fully made that peace, and paid down on the mercy-seat the full price of his Church's redemption, in bags richer than gold, even in blood. Oh! the blessedness of it. God saith, *in confirmation,*

I have found a ransom. Job xxxiii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Gen. xxiii. 16.

I admire the preciousness, as well as the strength of the argument the Apostle useth, from this view of the God of peace raising CHRIST from the dead, in confirmation of the Covenant in his blood; when he makes this the bottom, and foundation, for the LORD's making the Church perfect. For, in fact, this is the same principle which now worketh in them, which then worked in CHRIST. And not only so, but from the same cause. It is covenant-work from covenant-engagements. Reader! do you understand this? If so, the LORD give you also to see, that it is a firm, and sure principle, a certain principle, a covenant principle, and never can fail. It is a part of the same first cause, which began in the free, unpurchased, unmerited, unlooked-for, unheard-of grace, till revealed, at regeneration, by the HOLY GHOST. When God first chose the Church in CHRIST, and to be *without blame before him in love*, all the blessed things included in this choice, were folded up, as the seed to all future generations of that fruit, is in the first acorn. The same grace which chose, the same grace compleats. So that, the resurrection of CHRIST, gave a confirmation to all included in CHRIST. And in like manner, the same power which was exerted, by virtue of CHRIST's resurrection, to raise the sinner, then *dead in trespasses and sins*, is engaged, and will assuredly go forth, in every subsequent act, to *make perfect every good work, to do his will, working in his re-deemed that which is well pleasing in his sight, through JESUS CHRIST.*

I detain the Reader, just to observe the sweetness with which the Apostle closeth his prayer. *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Surely there was somewhat more than merely a form of words in the minds of the Apostles, when we find all of them uniformly, with one heart, and one voice, thus closed up their writings. You will say, they were inspired. To which I answer: Yes! they were. And these things are no small proof of it. But while we see, that their hearts were so filled with divine love, their tongues, and pens, could not fail to give testimony to the same, when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; I would ask, how is it that the consciousness of their inspired frame of mind, doth not affect us more? We read those blessed words but as ordinary things. We are accustomed to find the holy Apostles *beginning* their Epistles with the gracious salutations, such as *Grace, mercy, and peace be with you*; and ending them, with giving *glory, and praise, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB*: and we accept both but as words of course. Reader! Is it so with you? I acknowledge with shame, and sorrow, it is but too often so with me. Oh! for grace to both Writer and Reader, to be more alive to those precious things; and never more read those divine words, but with the most awakened affection!

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at

liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

¶ Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.

The salutations to the brethren I pass over to observe the blessed conclusion at the end. *Grace be with you all. Amen.* What could *Paul* say beyond this? And with what form of prayer could he as well close his Epistle? The close of all the dispensations among men, is to be thus, when God shall bring home the last stone of the spiritual building, it will be with shoutings, of *grace, grace unto it.* Zech. iv. 7. And both the Old Testament building, and the New, are but one and the same. CHRIST is the foundation-stone God hath laid in Zion, for the whole Church. And therefore, *Paul*, and every faithful Minister of the Sanctuary, like *Paul*, can say no more; neither close their ministry, or their life, in any manner more suitable, or proper for the Church of JESUS, than in the same sweet prayer: *Grace be with you all. Amen.* And may the faithful, and true Witness, CHRIST JESUS, who is the Amen, put his precious name to it Amen; and then grace will indeed be with all his people. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE let us pause, while reading the closing words of this most precious Epistle: and, as a man who hath been ascending an high hill, and is arrived at the summit of it, looks round, and takes a leisurely survey of the many beautiful prospects which come up to his view, from the rising ground he hath trodden; so may the Writer, and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, contemplate the unspeakable glories which God the SPIRIT hath presented before both, in this his Holy Scripture. Gracious LORD! I would say for myself, what praises do I owe thee, for the divine revelation herein contained? From the first opening of the subject, in the first Chapter, through all the portions of the sacred contents; what beauties, and glories, hast thou unveiled, of his Person, and Character, who is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! Beginning with the proofs of his GODHEAD, then of his Manhood, then of His glorious Person in union with *both*, as the God-Man-Mediator; how sweetly and blessedly hath my LORD the HOLY GHOST held him up to my view, and (shall I not hope) brought him home to my heart, in all his offices, characters, and relations, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people! Hail! thou Great, and glorious LORD JESUS CHRIST! thou *High Priest of thy people for ever, after the order of Melchizedec!*

Here then, let both Writer and Reader fall down on the knee of prayer and praise, before the throne; and in Him, and through Him, and by Him, through whom alone we can offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; bless the united Source of all our mercies,

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FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the ONE Glorious, and Eternal JEHOVAH, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, and all the fulness of grace and glory; in Him, for his Church, in time, and to all eternity.

And, as an instrument in the LORD's hand, let neither Writer, nor Reader of this little Work, overlook the faithful Apostle, whom GOD the SPIRIT was graciously pleased to appoint to this ministry, in handing down to the Church, from age to age, those sacred records, we have here gone over in the perusal. Truly, LORD, we cannot but see GOD the HOLY GHOST's distinguishing grace to this man, in this most honorable appointment. Well is it recorded, of the LORD's personal ordination of him to the ministry, when in the Church the voice was heard: *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them!* And oh! what a work indeed, not only in the then living ministry in person, to the Churches; but by his writings, in this, and the other blessed Epistles left on record for the everlasting instruction and comfort of the saints of GOD; whereby *he being dead, yet speaketh.* Farewell Paul! farewell, until the whole Church shall meet thee in glory, there together to praise GOD and the LAMB, for electing, redeeming, regenerating love, and favor, both to Pastor and People, all in One and the same glorious Head, to all eternity. Blessed be the LORD JESUS! for making thee his chosen vessel to bear his name as thou hast in those sacred writings done before Gentiles and Kings in every age of the Church.

LORD! add one blessing more. Pardon every thing of error in this humble work: and bless all that is offered upon it, as far as is agreeable to thy truth, and to thy mind, and will; that GOD *in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST.* Amen.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

JAMES.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IT should seem that the term *General Epistle*, is given to this part of the Holy Scriptures, in that, it is not addressed either to any particular Church or Person; but intended for the whole of CHRIST's Church and People. And though it appears to have been directed to the *twelve tribes of Israel*, scattered abroad, yet not *Israel* after the flesh, but the LORD's *Israel* after the SPIRIT, even the children of GOD, wheresoever scattered.