ing, praising and adoring the LORD. And the Evangelist hath put an *Amen* to the whole, as one of the precious names of JESUS, in confirmation of the glorious record. Amen. Reader! can You and I, from a conscious interest in the saving truths, put to it our Amen, as our JESUS? Isa. lxv. 16. Rev. iii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! ponder well the blessed contents of this chapter. Never, surely, was there upon earth any record given to any one matter of fact, as plainly, as fully, and as circumstantially, to bear down with a full stream of evidences all opposition, as the testimony to the Resurrection of JESUS. But while the vast chain of testimonies surround the glorious citadel of truth, as an impregnable fortress, to the full doctrine of the Person and Salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; what will the whole be found, where the heart is not renewed by grace? CHRIST is indeed risen from the dead? but are we risen with him? *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power!* Oh! for the earnest of the SPIRIT, by which the souls of the faithful are sealed unto the day of redemption!

Farewell *Luke!* Blessed be thy GOD, and my GOD, the Almighty SAVIOR of both, for the ministry of thy record of JESUS! Ere long, the whole Church will be called home, to enter upon the personal enjoyment of those glorious things which the LORD hath here commissioned thee to deliver to his people! And then will burst forth, from millions of the redeemed souls, the song of salvation to GOD and the Lamb. In the mean time, may my poor offering of praise be often awakened by grace, through this, and all the other blessed portions of the holy Scriptures of truth, to bless the united source of all covenant mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all their love and purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. JOHN.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

THE Gospel according to *St. John*, comes home endeared to the Church of GOD in such a fulness of blessings, as cannot fail, under divine teaching, to call forth from every heart of the redeemed, unceasing praises to the Almighty Author *of every good, and every perfect gift*, for so precious a

treasure given to his people. Some of the antient Fathers, in their warmth of affection to this part of the inspired writings, was accustomed to call it a *spiritual Gospel.* And such it certainly is; for GOD the SPIRIT is the Author of it. But then it should at the same time be remembered, that such are all the Gospels. For the LORD JESUS saith, *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,* John vi. 63. And these divine and spiritual words of the LORD JESUS, are in the writings of all the Evangelists. But, perhaps the beloved Apostle, (for such *John* was specially called,) was led by the HOLY GHOST to dwell more largely on the discourses of the LORD JESUS than the other inspired writers of the Gospel; and therefore as the early saints of GOD, under divine teaching, felt the blessedness of his spiritual and heavenly writings on these subjects, they were prompted thus to distinguish them.

We cannot sufficiently bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the ministry of this man, in all his writings, and eminently on account of this most blessed portion of the word of GOD. Here we have not only more contained in it of our LORD'S divine discourses than the other Evangelists were commissioned to deliver, but we have also, both in relation to CHRIST'S sermons and miracles, many glorious truths which were not noticed by the other Evangelists. And what tends, if possible, yet more to endear the Gospel according to St. *John* to the Church, is, that by this man's ministry herein, we have preserved to us those most blessed discourses of CHRIST, concerning the Person, Work, Offices, and Character of GOD the HOLY GHOST, without whose soul-quickening, and life-giving operations, none can be brought forth into spiritual apprehensions of union with CHRIST; and *be made wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in* CHRIST JESUS. Every child of GOD, who is conscious of the great work of regeneration having passed upon him, and hath felt in his own soul the renewing influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST'S sovereign and Almighty power, will clasp this blessed Gospel of the ever blessed GOD in his arms, and press it to his heart, crying out in words like those of the Apostles, *Thanks be unto* GOD *for his unspeakable gift!*

It were needless to tell the Reader what were the plain designs of GOD the SPIRIT, in commissioning his servant *John* to give those records of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to his Church. They are made manifest in every chapter. The Apostle opens with the fullest declaration to the GODHEAD of CHRIST; and then proceeds to make manifest, in equal terms of plainness, the *Manhood* of our LORD; and, from the most ample demonstrations of the union of *both*, he shews what all the Scriptures of GOD blessedly harmonize in to confirm, that CHRIST is *the*

power of GOD, *and the wisdom of* GOD, *for salvation to every one that believeth.* These glorious truths the Reader will meet in every part of the Gospel according to St. *John*, if the LORD the HOLY GHOST be his teacher.

I shall not think it necessary to detain him any longer by way of Preface. *John* hath not related to us in this Gospel, any circumstances of his own history, but confined himself wholly to the one momentous subject for which he wrote, and which seems to have fully occupied his mind. The LORD JESUS, and Him alone, swallowed up the Apostle's sole attention. *John* hath not so much as dated the *time* of writing his Gospel; neither hath he made mention of the *place* from whence it was written. Various dates have been given to it by others. *Some* make it as early as about *thirty years* after our LORD'S ascension. And some place it so late as *sixty years* from that glorious event. But the whole is conjecture. It is our happiness that this is of no moment. That the penman of it was *John*, the beloved Apostle, who lay in CHRIST'S bosom; that he was inspired in the writing of it; that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath blessed it in all ages of the Church; that He doth bless it, and will continue to bless it in the Church of GOD to the latest ages, while she remains in her present time-state, until the LORD JESUS, as her bridegroom, comes to take her home to glory; these are the grand points with which we are chiefly concerned, and these, blessed be our covenant-GOD in CHRIST, are abundantly confirmed and assured. May the LORD the HOLY GHOST grant to both Writer and Reader his blessed teachings in the perusal of this, and every other part of the word of GOD, that as *John* himself said, so we may find, *we have an unction from the* HOLY ONE, *and know all things.* 1 John ii. 20. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

John *opens his Gospel in this Chapter, with declaring both to the* GODHEAD *and Manhood of the* LORD JESUS CHRIST. *The Testimony of* John the Baptist *is here given to the Person and Glory of* CHRIST. *The calling of* Andrew *and* Peter. *An Account of* Nathaniel.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God.

Every word in this verse is big with importance. LORD! I would say on entering the sacred portal, vouchsafe to go before, guide, and direct every step to the right apprehension of those solemn truths, that both Writer and Reader may receive them, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the* HOLY GHOST *teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* 1 Cor. ii. 13.

And here let the Reader observe, how blessedly *John* was taught to speak of the WORD: One of those Holy Three which bear record in heaven. Had we no other authority to this great truth, but what GOD the HOLY GHOST commissioned *John* to give the Church, this would be enough in confirmation, when he said, *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the* FATHER, *the* WORD, *and the* HOLY GHOST, *and these Three are One.* 1 John v. 7. So blessedly *John* opens his Gospel, in attestation to the Essential GODHEAD of the SON of GOD, as GOD. This was in the beginning, before all time, before all worlds, before all things. He was with GOD, and was GOD, and is GOD! And elsewhere he calls him *Eternal Life.* 1 John i. 1, 2. I beseech the Reader to mark this down, or rather to beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to mark it down for him in the fleshy tables of his heart, as the sure and unerring foundation of all the fundamental principles of faith. John xvi. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

When this first and leading principle is fully established in the soul, we may from this opening of *John's* Gospel go on to enquire, and from the same divine teaching, whether, when the Apostle thus speaks of *the beginning,* in which this word was with GOD, and was GOD, is not meant, that in the beginning of JEHOVAH's purposes, and decrees, and will, and council, and pleasure concerning the Church, this Almighty One was set apart, as in the fulness of time, and (as soon after related by *John*) to become flesh, and dwell among his people? Is he not also called the Word, not only as in relation to his essence in the GODHEAD, but as He is himself the revealed word, and indeed the only revelation in himself of JEHOVAH to his people? The Reader will not forget, that on so sublime a subject I humbly propose the question, but do not decide upon it. But, according to my apprehension, the very word *beginning* so explains it. For what beginning? Not the beginning of eternity: the very phrase is not admissible. But the beginning of the manifestation of JEHOVAH's purposes, as relating to the Church. The *beginning* of this work to the Church of *grace* and *glory,* being a similar expression to what is used in the *beginning,* in reference to what is said in the opening of *Genesis,* when JEHOVAH went forth in his threefold character of person, in the works of *creation.* Gen. i. 1. And if this be the sense concerning the word, we are taught in this verse to consider the SON of GOD in it, both as the Essential Word, and as the Revealed Word, standing forth in JEHOVAH's council, and set up as he is elsewhere revealed, as the Essential Wisdom, the Head of his Church from everlasting. See Prov. viii. 22—31.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

These words throw a further light upon the verse before, and considered in conjunction with it, very blessedly explain the whole, as far as a subject of such mystery is capable of being explained to our present unripe faculties. This WORD, this Logos, was not only in himself essentially GOD, but together with the other persons of the GODHEAD, was in all the council, will, and purpose of JEHOVAH. So

that when JEHOVAH went forth in acts of creation, in his threefold character of person, he was engaged in the same Almighty agency. To this grand point the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle bears testimony, when he saith, GOD *created all things by* JESUS CHRIST. Ephes. iii. 9.

And in further confirmation of this unquestionable truth, we learn from the same authority, that, *by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Coloss. i. 15—19. Here we have ascribed to the LORD JESUS the works of all creation, comprehending from the highest created being to the lowest. And not only created *by* him, but *for* him; and not only giving him the precedency of being *before* all things, but declaring that as he is the Creator, so he is the upholder and preserver of all things; for their consistency, or very being, is in him and by him. And that these things are spoken of the SON of GOD, not as GOD only, but as the WORD here described, subsisting in the SON of GOD, as GOD, in consequence of those antient decrees between the persons of the GODHEAD before all worlds, in relation to the Church, is evident from hence, that it is in this very character, as the Head of his Church, he is here considered, and who, hereafter, in the fulness of time, was openly to tabernacle in our nature. See Rev. v. 6—10. explained by Psm. ii. 7.

I must not detain the Reader. But I cannot dismiss the subject opened to us by those verses, before that I have first desired of him to consider what is said in the passage just quoted, of *the Image of the Invisible* GOD. Not surely an image, or resemblance, of what is invisible. For the Reader need not be told that GOD is invisible. 1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16. But the HOLY GHOST hath explained the sense of it in this very chapter, (verse 18.) *No man hath seen God,* (that is, hath seen him in his essence and glory as GOD; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST,) *at any time, the only begotten* SON, *which is in the bosom of the* FATHER, *he hath declared him*; that is, the SON, in this begotten character, set up in the infinite mind of JEHOVAH as making manifest all the purposes of GOD concerning the Church, he hath laid open the mind of GOD, and as such is *the brightness of his* FATHER'S *glory, and the express image of his person.* Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. See my further observations on this subject in the *Poor Man's Commentary,* on Coloss. i. 15. And is it not in this sense (I only ask, not determine the question,) we are to understand that Scripture at the creation, when the first earthly man was to be formed; *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* Gen. i. 26. Was not this likeness to be in reference to CHRIST, as CHRIST, subsisting in covenant engagements? How, otherwise, can it be said, that *in all things he might have the pre-eminence?* Coloss. i. 18. And is it not in the same sense, (I again ask the question, but do not decide,) that scripture hath respect, when it is said, *Behold! the man is become as one of us!* Gen. iii. 22. Who was thus become? Not *Adam,* surely! For, by transgression, he had lost all knowledge of GOD, and was spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. And the whole passage that follows with his expulsion from *Eden* proves it. But I must trespass no further.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

What a beautiful account doth this verse give of CHRIST, when considered in connection with what went before. *In him*, that is, essentially, and in himself underived, and in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, he is life, the origin, fountain, and source of all life, natural, spiritual, eternal. And as by virtue of his own eternal power and GODHEAD, he is the efficient cause of all life to all creatures, so in a special and personal manner he is the life, and the light of men; natural life and light to them who are in a state of nature; and spiritual life and light to them to whom he communicates grace. Nothing can be more evident than this statement, and nothing can be more blessed.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Here is drawn the line of distinction between the character of those who from the natural blindness of a fallen state, unawakened by the HOLY GHOST, have no perception of the person and glory of CHRIST; and those who from grace-union with him, are called out of darkness into his marvellous light. Pause, Reader! and contemplate the vast privileges of the LORD's people.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John:

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

I refer the Reader for some account of *John the Baptist* to Matt. iii. and Luke i. I shall have occasion to state somewhat more of the peculiar blessedness of this man's ministry before we close this Chapter.

9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The sense of this verse, which in itself, under divine teaching, is as plain as any portion of the word of GOD, by the perversion or ignorance of men, is brought forward to strengthen the opinion of those who profess that all men are endued with an inward light, which, they say, is sufficient for all the purposes of religion. And this they advance in direct opposition to what the LORD JESUS himself hath said, that *the light which is in a man* may be altogether *darkness*. And in consequence hath left upon record this solemn precept, *Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness!* Matt. vi. 23. Luke xi. 35. But *John's* account of CHRIST in this verse is both plain and obvious. If we accept the words as referring to mere *natural*

light, nothing can be more true than that CHRIST, as the Great Creator and Author of nature, *lighteth every man that cometh into the world* with all the understanding which in nature that man hath. And if we refer the expression to the light of *grace*, equally certain it is, that every man that cometh into the world who is enlightened by grace, must derive it wholly from CHRIST. So that CHRIST is the Author and Giver of both. And it is clearly in this sense the Apostle meant it. For it should be observed, that the Evangelist is here advancing the glory of CHRIST, and not of the glory of man.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him; and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:

This is a most beautiful passage, and serves to illustrate and explain the many glorious truths which the Evangelist had before been advancing concerning CHRIST. *He was in the world.* When? Yea! from all eternity. Not in his *human* nature, for he had not as then, openly tabernacled in flesh. And it is not said of his *divine* nature *only*, for in that sense it would have been a needless observation. But He was in the world when in his covenant character he was *set up from everlasting*, and when JEHOVAH *possessed him* (as he himself expresses it) under another of his Mediator-names, *Wisdom*; see Prov. viii. 22. with 1 Cor. i. 24. *And the world was made by him.* This hath been before shewn, see verses 2, 3. *And the world knew him not.* By the fall in the Adam-nature of sin, all men lost all apprehension of GOD, and became ignorant both of themselves and their Maker. Psm. xiv. 1, 2. Psm. x. 4. *He came unto his own.* What own? The world and all that is therein was his own by right of *creation.* But this is not what is meant by the phrase *his own.* Neither is it meant his own by right of *redemption*, when it is added, *that his own received him not.* For they did, and will all of them receive him. For so the promise in the charter of grace runs, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* Psm. cx. 3. And the LORD JESUS himself confirms the same, when he saith, *All that the* FATHER *giveth me shall come to me.* John vi. 37. But the *own* of CHRIST here spoken of, means his own nation the Jews, to whom was committed *the law, and the service of* GOD *and the promises*; and they fulfilled their own scriptures in rejecting him. See Rom. ix. 4. with Acts xiii. 27. For a further account of CHRIST's *own*, see John xiii. 1. Now, Reader! having taken notice of those who, though CHRIST's *own*, as a nation received him *not*; I pray you to mark the very different character of those his own in right that *did.* And observe well for your

own sake how they are known; and then see whether in experience you bear a correspondence to them. They are described as *not born of blood.* Nothing of the hereditary blood of *Adam* gives birth to this chosen seed; neither the outward blood of circumcision by *Moses;* not the old birth of nature contributing to the new birth of grace. *Nor of the will of the flesh.* Nothing derived by human generation from father to son; nothing arising out of the corrupt stock of a fallen race, can lead to a spiritual regeneration by the LORD. *Nor of the will of man, but of* GOD. No ungodly man can *will* an ungodly man into these high privileges. No! Neither can a godly father *will* the son he loves into them. The great father of the faithful *Abraham* wished it for *Ishmael,* but could not *will* it. Gen. xvii. 18. *It is not* (saith One that could not be mistaken,) *of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of* GOD *that sheweth mercy.* Rom. ix. 16. Reader! what saith your own personal knowledge of these things? Oh! the preciousness of distinguishing mercy!

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

If there be a single verse in the Bible marked with the special emphasis of GOD the HOLY GHOST, surely this is one. Every word tells. Here is the glorious person so much and so highly spoken of before under the name of the WORD, declared to be made *flesh.* And this distinct from the person of either the FATHER or the HOLY GHOST. It is the SON of GOD *only.* He is made flesh. The original word translated *flesh,* is very strong. It is *Sarx.* The same word as is used Rom. iii. 20. where no flesh is said to be justified. And elsewhere CHRIST is said to be made in the likeness of *sinful* flesh. Rom. viii. 3. And it is a word of the same significancy with one in the Hebrew, used Gen. vi. 12. *corrupt* flesh. So that no word of stronger import can be found to denote the vast humiliation of the SON of GOD in the assuming of our nature. Had the verse expressed that the WORD was made *Man,* though the same nature would have been implied, yet it would not have been so strong, as to the point of degradation. The word means our full nature, both of soul and body, compleat man. And it is so very fully expressed by the word *flesh,* that the assumption implies the most perfect union of the both natures, divine and human. Not by any change or alteration of the one by the taking the other; but by the junction forming and constituting one whole person, GOD and Man Mediator, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. As *Augustine* hath happily expressed it, when speaking of the word being made flesh; "Not (said he) by changing what he was, but by taking what he was not." And what endears the whole, and renders it truly blessed to all his people who are *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,* is, that this union of GOD and Man in one person, is indissoluble and for ever. JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

And how blessedly *John* speaks of his and his brethren's knowledge of CHRIST under this precious union. *He dwelt among us* (said *John,*)

tabernacled, as the word is, alluding to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, which was (and no doubt considered as such by holy men of old,) a type of CHRIST's human nature, in which JEHOVAH dwelt, and from which manifestations were made. *We beheld his glory,* (said he,) observe, *his glory.* Yes! because in his divine nature, truly his own, underived as it was, it could be called no other. And this glory, like to that of GOD's own SON, *full of grace and truth.* Reader! think what a blessed testimony is here to the GODHEAD of CHRIST, to the Manhood of CHRIST, and to the union of both. And do not fail to observe, that all this was in the same time while CHRIST came to his own, and his own received him not; distinguishing grace taught *John* and his brethren thus to behold CHRIST's glory, and rejoice in it. Depend upon it, so is it now, so hath it been in all ages of the Church, and so will it be as long as the earth shall continue!

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him.*

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? and he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees:

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

Here we have the introduction of *John the Baptist*, the herald and harbinger of CHRIST. In addition to what hath been offered on the Person and Office of this man, Matt. iii. and xi. to which I refer, I would just remark what a dignity and glory *John* ascribes unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in testimony of his own nothingness, and the infinite greatness of JESUS. I pray the Reader to observe these things. He speaks of his water baptism, when compared to CHRIST's spiritual baptism, as nothing. And do not overlook how fully *John* preached the GODHEAD of the LORD JESUS, when declaring that he should baptize with the HOLY GHOST. Could any less than GOD baptize with the baptisms of the HOLY GHOST? Could any less than GOD bless with the blessing of GOD? And I beg the Reader to observe, yet further, with what equal strength *John* bare witness to the momentous doctrine of redemption by the blood of the Lamb, when he called upon the people to behold CHRIST, *the Lamb of* GOD, *which taketh away the sin of the world!* CHRIST is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. Indeed the scripture is full of this subject, in allusion to CHRIST. Exod. xii. throughout. Levit. ix. 3. Isaiah liii. 7. Rev. v. 6. And what is never to be lost sight of, CHRIST is the Lamb of GOD, one of GOD's own providing. Rom. iii. 25. And I must beg yet further to observe, from the very great preciousness of this man's testimony to both those grand points; namely, the GODHEAD of CHRIST, and redemption by his blood, that *John* was specially and personally ordained for this express purpose. He was predicted by the Prophets *Isaiah* and *Malachi*, to come as *a voice in the wilderness to prepare the way of the* LORD. And he was to come in the spirit and power of *Elias*, and cry aloud as the witness of the LORD. And to set forth the greatness of this man's character and office yet more, when the time arrived for his appearing, an angel was sent to speak of his birth, who declared that he should be great in the sight of the LORD, *and be filled with the* HOLY GHOST *even from his mother's womb.* Luke i. 11—15. Thus ordained, and thus consecrated, the whole purport of his ministry may be summed

up in those two grand evidences which he bore to the person of CHRIST, and to the one great work of CHRIST. So that here is GOD the HOLY GHOST raising up this man, this greatest of Prophets (as our LORD declared him,) born among women, to bear testimony to JESUS, and to make a public outcry of it through the Church. Reader! what are *your* views of these things? Oh! how truly blessed to my soul! Oh! how gracious in GOD the HOLY GHOST, to give such testimony in the present day of a CHRIST-despising generation!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

There is somewhat very interesting from the simplicity and artlessness in which the *Baptist* relates the account of his knowledge of JESUS. It appears very plain from what is here said, that CHRIST and his servant *John* had never met until about the time of CHRIST's baptism. For we read that *John* was *in the deserts until the day of his shewing unto Israel.* Luke i. 80. And JESUS is said to have lived at Nazareth. Hence when CHRIST went to *Jordan* for baptism, *John* was then preaching in the wilderness of *Judæa.* And John's account of his discovery of CHRIST, by the marks wherewith he was told he should know him, these were the only testimonies John received for the knowledge of his LORD. *He that sent me to baptize,* (said *John,*) *the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the* HOLY GHOST. *And I saw,* (saith *John,*) *and bare record that this is the* SON of GOD. Doth the Reader ask who sent *John?* Let him once more read the 6th verse of this chapter, and probably he will be inclined to think with me, that it was GOD the HOLY GHOST. *There was a man* (saith the Evangelist) *sent from* GOD, *whose name was John.* Reader! will you not feel increasing cause, as you pass on from one evidence to another, to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the testimony of this man? Think, I beseech you, how that Almighty

LORD hath watched, and is watching over the interests of his Church and people, in affording such a cloud of witnesses wherewith we are encompassed? Again I say, Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for the preciousness of such a testimony in the present day of a CHRIST-despising generation!

35 ¶ Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak. And they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master?) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.

I do not presume to speak decidedly upon the subject, but I confess that I am inclined to think that these words of *John*, and the earnest look which he cast on the LORD JESUS, as he said, *behold the Lamb of* GOD! were commissioned with peculiar power to the minds of these two disciples. It is supposed that *John*, the writer of this Gospel, was one of the two. But it is not said. However, we are told that they followed JESUS. Somewhat, it is certain, arrested their attention. The gracious invitation of CHRIST, the earnestness of *Andrew* to find his brother, and the great joy he expressed in having found the CHRIST: our LORD's first address to *Peter*, and all that followed, form very interesting matter for our meditation. But I must not trespass.

43 The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth! Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael said unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the king of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

The call of *Philip* and *Nathaniel*, and the relation of CHRIST's conversation with them, is most sweet and instructing. But what I would chiefly beg the Reader to notice, in what remains in this chapter, is, the LORD's exercise of his divine knowledge to the conviction of *Nathaniel*, in that he said, he saw him under the fig-tree, and that *Philip* had called him. The fig-trees in *Judæa* were large and shady, and godly persons made them what is called *Proseuches*, or places for prayer. By JESUS telling him that he was there when *Philip* called him, the heart of *Nathaniel* was at once convinced he must be GOD, since no eye but the eye of GOD could have seen him there. Our LORD's kind approbation of his faith, and as gracious a promise of the greater manifestations he should receive, should be considered as not relating to *Nathaniel* only, but a general assurance of *Bethel*-visits, like the ladder of *Jacob*, to all his redeemed, both to their

own private and personal enjoyments, and to the public and universal happiness of the Church at the last day. Perhaps I should have observed, concerning our LORD's testimony to *Nathaniel*, that JESUS meant not that this seed of *Abraham* was without guile. For this can be said of none but CHRIST himself. Neither, rightly considered, do our LORD's words go to such extent. By an *Israelite indeed*, I should conceive is meant, not simply one that is a real descendant after the flesh, from the stock of *Abraham; for all are not Israel which are of Israel.* Rom. ix. 6. but an Israelite indeed, means one of the *children of promise.* Gal. iv. 28. whom GOD the FATHER hath given to his dear SON. And in this sense, the guileless mind of *Nathaniel*, hath a respect to the man's state as he stood accepted in CHRIST, and not as to his own holiness before GOD, for in this sense, he had none, neither could have been without guile. The Reader, if he knows any thing of the plague of his own heart, and of the covenant righteousness in which the whole Church, both in heaven and earth, is considered before GOD as wholly in CHRIST, will enter into a full apprehension of the inestimable preciousness of this doctrine, which is after godliness, and gladly join issue with the Prophet when he said, *In the* LORD *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Isaiah xlv. 25. For the double *Verily*, used by our LORD, in the last verse of this chapter: See John x. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

READER let you and I, in the review of this blessed Chapter, do as *Moses* and *Israel* did, at the borders of the Red Sea; stand still, and contemplate what is here revealed of the salvation of the LORD. Never surely was there ever a proclamation from heaven more full, conclusive, and satisfactory, in confirmation of the GODHEAD of CHRIST; the glories of his Person, the infinite preciousness of his work, and the greatness of his salvation! Oh! what a thought for the Church of GOD to cherish, and to feast upon, to all eternity; that *the* WORD *was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* And Oh! for grace, like the chosen disciples of the LORD, to behold his glory, *the glory, as of the only begotten of the* FATHER, *full of grace and truth!*

Blessed for ever be the GOD, and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath so loved us as to give his only begotten SON! And blessed be GOD the SON, who hath so loved us as to give himself for us. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, whose everlasting love prompted his infinite mind to give all the precious manifestations of the LORD in his scriptures. Oh! how inexpressibly sweet are all those views of JESUS, which GOD the SPIRIT hath here given of the GODHEAD, Person, Work, Glory, Grace, and Love, of the LORD JESUS.

And LORD! give thy whole Church upon earth grace to praise thee, for the wonderful witness of that wonderful man, *John the Baptist.* LORD, the SPIRIT! do thou graciously be pleased to give to every child of GOD, thy heavenly teachings, that we may enter into a full apprehension of the design of his ministry; and behold him as raised up on purpose, and filled with the HOLY GHOST, even from the womb, to testify to those two great features of the LORD JESUS, contained

in this Chapter; namely, his GODHEAD, and the efficacy of his one all-effectual sacrifice. For surely, the testimonies alone, which this herald of the LORD hath given, are in themselves enough to carry before them all the infidelity of the present CHRIST-despising generation. Oh! for a boldness in the faith, to say as *Paul* did upon a like occasion, to the infidels of his day; *behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish!* Dearest JESUS! may it be my portion, with all the *Andrews*, and *Peters*, and *Philips*, and *Nathaniels*, of this age of the Church, having found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write; to testify to thy glorious name and character, and say, *Rabbi! thou art the* SON *of* God! *thou art the King of Israel!*

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

CHRIST *at a Marriage Feast, converteth Water into Wine. He departeth to* Capernaum. *He drives the Buyers and Sellers from the Temple.*

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there.

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was; but the servants which drew the water knew; the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine. And when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory: and his disciples believed on him.

The circumstances of this marriage feast, and the miracle JESUS then wrought, are so beautifully expressed, in the plain and artless language of the Evangelist, as to need no comment. I only take occasion therefore to observe, how many sweet instructions the subject ministers to us, in the contemplation of JESUS, and his disciples.

We are told, that this was the beginning of miracles, and most probably the first the LORD JESUS wrought, upon his entrance on his public ministry. And certain it is, that it is the first, and among the highest miracles the SON of GOD ever wrought in his own marriage with our nature. Then JESUS indeed turned our water into wine, for every thing then became blessings in CHRIST. And certainly there was somewhat of significancy in this miracle. For it is remarkable, that *Moses*, commissioned by the LORD, turned the water of Egypt into blood. Our Almighty *Moses*, whom JEHOVAH hath sent into the Egypt of our world, hath turned both our common mercies and our gospel mercies into wine. Exod. vii. 19. The miracle of *Moses* the servant, was for destruction! The miracle of Moses's LORD was, and is for life everlasting. Sweetly the Church sings to this: Song i. 2. Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.

I cannot dismiss the view of this marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee*, which the LORD and his disciples graced with their presence, without observing how much JESUS hath sanctioned the holy and honorable estate of marriage, by this act. Surely as the Apostle hath said, *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.* Heb. xiii. 4. And methinks, I would take occasion therefrom, to enforce the same plan the Jewish bridal feast set forth, of inviting JESUS and his disciples to every godly marriage union. If the holy order be founded in CHRIST, and each party becomes a true yoke-fellow in the LORD; what a pleasing prospect it affords of promoting, under his blessing, the truest happiness of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. And to the wants of this world, where JESUS dwells, every supply necessary may be hoped for. He that turned water into wine to answer the momentary feast, can soon convert every thing even of evil into good; and rather than that his redeemed shall want any thing needful, will bring resourses from their enemies' table. *All things shall work together for good to them that love* GOD: *to them that are called according to his purpose.* Rom. viii. 28.

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

13 ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And he said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

I pass by every lesser consideration contained in those verses, to attend to that one event here recorded, of our LORD's making a scourge of small cords, and driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. If the Reader coolly and deliberately turns over in his mind the wonderful event here recorded, perhaps when all the circumstances are taken together into one point of view, and duly pondered, he will be inclined to think, with me, that excepting that one miracle mentioned by this same Evangelist, John xviii. 6, of the armed soldiers falling to the ground at the mere word of CHRIST, in answer to their question; this is the greatest miracle CHRIST wrought in the days of his flesh. Let the Reader figure to himself the LORD JESUS, thus going into the Temple, carrying every thing before him; driving the herds of cattle; overturning the tables; and pouring out the changer's money: and not a creature daring to resist him! What invincible power must have shone forth in his countenance! how their minds must have been overawed? Such indeed was the consternation on their part, and such the majesty that shone in CHRIST, that it brought the passage of the Prophet to the Apostles' minds; and they then saw the accomplishment of it. Psm. lxix. 9. And to the same purport where the LORD again speaks: Psm. cxix. 139. And what I beg yet more particularly the Reader to notice in this miracle, is the words of JESUS, when he was driving all before him: *Make not my* FATHER's *house an house of merchandize!* No prophet ever used such language. None but CHRIST ever called GOD FATHER! Neither did ever GOD call any among all his prophets, Sons. It is JESUS only, which useth this name. And CHRIST only whom GOD so owns. Let the Reader, while he views, and reviews, this wonderful transaction, turn to the prophecy of *Malachi*, and read the *first five* verses of the *third* Chapter; and then ask himself, whether this was not the LORD of his Temple so accurately described in the Portrait of Prophecy; and so completely answered by the original, when this event of purging the Temple took

place? I must not close my observations on this transaction, without first remarking to the Reader, that I conceive our LORD made another visit of the same kind to the Temple just before his crucifixion. But if he compares the scripture where that second cleansing is related, with this; he will find, that there is between them a difference. Indeed it could hardly be one and the same, because this which *John* relates, was in the early part of CHRIST's ministry; whereas, the other was nearly at the close of it. See Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

18 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

It really should seem, by the conduct of those men, and their asking CHRIST to shew them some sign, for such an exercise of his authority; as if for the moment, they had been overawed, and more than half convinced, who CHRIST was. Had this not been the case, one should have expected to have seen them to a man reddened with anger, and seizing JESUS, to bring him to punishment. Whereas, they never attempted to oppose what the LORD did; neither to gainsay what the LORD said. JESUS called GOD his FATHER; and in confirmation purged the Temple, which they had profaned. To all which, the whole body of them made no resistance; but after a pause, they asked him for some further sign in proof of his mission.

Doth my Reader also wonder in beholding them thus panic struck? Surely not. He, I hope, can well explain the cause. Did not the countenance of the LORD JESUS, as well as his actions, manifest somewhat both of his Almighty Person, and Power? If the zeal of his FATHER's house had eaten him up; (as he himself expresses it;) did not his face bespeak it? Reader! think, I beseech you, if in the days of CHRIST's flesh such glory occasionally broke forth, as in this instance, to the confusion of all his enemies; (See also John xviii. 6.) and as in another, to the joy of his friends; (See Matt. xvii. 1—5.) what will be his appearance in that day, when *the ungodly shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the* LORD, *and from the glory of his power; and when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe?* 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. Oh! the forbearance of our adorable LORD, when driving those buyers and sellers from the temple, that he drove them not into hell!

But I pray the Reader yet further to observe, the LORD's grace to his Church and people, in the sign he gave, to the demand of his foes. It is his redeemed, and not others, for whom this precious sign was meant; and to whom it ministers blessedness. When JESUS thus spake of the destruction of the temple, the HOLY GHOST would not leave the Church to make her own comment upon it; but by the mouth of the Apostles, taught his redeemed, that JESUS *spake of the temple of his body.* So that when JESUS arose from the dead, which was at the distance of *three years after* this conversation the LORD held with the Jews, they called to mind what had then passed, and felt as we now feel under the divine conviction, the blessed testimony to the whole; *they believed the scripture, and the word which he had spoken.*

I must not suffer the Reader to overlook the greatness and compleatness of this sign; which, while it acted to those blind Jews as *a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence;* to the enlightened believer, it becomes a blessed testimony to that *glorious Rock which* JEHOVAH *laid in Zion.* They made this sign of JESUS the great charge of blasphemy against CHRIST, when arraigned before *Pilate.* Matt. xxvi. 61. And, Reader! you and I, if taught of GOD, make it a most precious evidence of his eternal Power, and GODHEAD. *Destroy this temple,* (said the LORD,) this temple of my body; and *in three days I will raise it up!* The former was done, when (as *Peter* under the HOLY GHOST charged them) *with wicked hands,* JESUS was *taken by them and crucified and slain.* Acts ii. 23. And JESUS accomplished the *latter,* when by his own Almighty Power, he arose from the dead. Observe the expression which CHRIST made use of, *I will raise it up!* And if you ask the cause? the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of *Peter* answers; *having loosed* (said he) *the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.* Acts ii. 24. But it would not only have been possible, but certain and sure, that the pains of death, which are the wages of sin, would have held any man and every man a prisoner, which died for sin; had not the divine nature of CHRIST, been in this solemn transaction. But in the Person of CHRIST, GOD and Man in One, it became impossible. The Prophets which foretold his death, foretold at the same time, that *his soul should not be left in hell; neither* GOD's *holy one to see corruption.* Psm. xvi. 10. Hence, as the HOLY GHOST by *Peter,* in another scripture, hath said; CHRIST was *put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the* SPIRIT. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Reader! what are now your apprehensions of this blessed sign?

23 Now when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day,* many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men,*

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Reader! I detain you no longer on those verses, than to ask you, what further proofs can be needed to the GODHEAD of your LORD, than what is here said. Who less than He that made man, can know the thoughts of man?

REFLECTIONS.

How is it possible to behold my LORD, honoring the bridal feast with his presence and miracles without having the mind led to the consideration of that yet more astonishing miracle, when the SON of GOD first betrothed his Church to himself, *in righteousness, in judgment, in loving kindness, and in mercies; and in faithfulness forever!* Here I would say, as often as my soul reviews the vast mercy, here my LORD, my *Ishi*, my Husband, is indeed everlastingly blessing his Church with his presence; supplying every want, and turning all my water into wine. LORD! do thou daily manifest forth thy glory; and cause me by thy sweet influences, unceasingly to believe in thee.

Blessed LORD the SPIRIT! praised be thy name for this precious record of my LORD's zeal in purging his Temple. Do thou, LORD, so cleanse my heart; for thou hast said, the bodies of thy people are the temple of the HOLY GHOST, which dwelleth in them. And if my GOD will drive out all the vain thoughts which lodge there, which like the buyers and sellers in the Temple, so defile my poor heart; then, by my LORD's indwelling presence, shall I be enabled *to glorify* GOD, *in my body and in my spirit, which are his.*

And praised be my LORD for the very precious sign he gave the Jews; and for the very precious confirmation of it which followed. Yes! thou glorious LORD; while both the power of GOD the FATHER, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, were manifested in thy triumphs over death and the grave; thou wast most fully *declared to be the* SON *of* GOD *with power, according to the* SPIRIT *of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead!* And is it not by this same blessed testimony, the whole Church rests in hope for the sure accomplishment of the same in all thy mystical members! Hail! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Sure I am, that because thou livest, thy redeemed shall live also!

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

CHRIST *hath a conversation with* Nicodemus. *The* LORD *discourseth on the New-birth; and declares its absolute Necessity, for an Entrance into his Kingdom. Some further Account of* John the Baptist.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher

come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareth the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We can never be sufficiently thankful to our adorable LORD, for this blessed discourse of his, upon the important doctrine of regeneration, or the new birth; neither to the person and grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in causing it to be so circumstantially recorded. LORD! give to thy people a clear apprehension of the precious truth itself, and of their personal interest in it.

I not only admire the very sweet and engaging manner in which the LORD hath explained the subject; but that he should make choice of a *Pharisee* to explain it, by way of conveying it to his Church. A *Pharisee*, had all the high notions of self-righteousness; and considering himself as a true descendant of *Abraham* after the flesh, he concluded, that this gave a legal right to all the promises of GOD. And in the case of *Nicodemus*, a ruler of the Jews, one of the *Sanhedrim*, and a master in Israel, no doubt he stood among the highest order of that leading class of people.

JESUS, hath so very plainly stated, both the principles of the new birth, and the effects which follow; that there can need, when taught of GOD, nothing more than an attention to our LORD's own words, to enter into a full apprehension of the subject. By the birth of nature, involved in the Adam-fall of sin and transgression, the Church of CHRIST, as well as the whole world at large, is born in a polluted, carnal, and ungodly state. So that there must be a new birth by grace, and which the glorious Covenant of Redemption hath secured for the whole seed of CHRIST, to bring forth into a new and spiritual life. Without this saving change passing upon the sinner, there can be no possibility of entering the kingdom of GOD.

From a grace-union with CHRIST, given by GOD the FATHER, before all worlds, to the Church, (Ephes. i. 4.) this interest in the adoption-character of children is secured; and by the act of regeneration, wrought by GOD the HOLY GHOST upon the soul, a meekness for grace here, and glory hereafter, is accomplished.

But plain as this statement is, to every truly regenerated child of GOD, who is himself an happy partaker of the unspeakable mercy; every carnal man, like this *Pharisee*, with whom our LORD conversed on the subject, will cry out, *how can these things be?* But so hath the HOLY GHOST taught us to expect. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the* SPIRIT *of* GOD, *for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. Reader! this is a blessed reality, to which the whole Church of GOD, in heaven and earth, can and do bear witness. There is not one now among *the spirits of just men made perfect* in heaven, but what was once in the Adam-nature of an unawakened, carnal state: and out of which he was brought, by this sovereign work of GOD the HOLY GHOST upon his soul. Neither is there one among the children of GOD in the Church upon earth, when regenerated, but what hath by the same distinguishing mercy, *passed from death to life;* and been *translated from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of* GOD'S *dear* SON. John iii. 14. Coloss. i. 13.

I must request the Reader not to overlook the beautiful similitude which the LORD made use of, for illustrating this sovereign work of GOD the HOLY GHOST. The source of the air in nature, is altogether unknown. We see, and feel, the powerful effects of it; and that is all we know of it. The greatest philosopher, and the poorest peasant, are here upon a level. Neither of them can explain, how storms are gendered; where winds are first raised; what keep them up, and carry them on; where they retire when the blast is over; and what becomes of them when gone. Now (saith JESUS,) so is *every one that is born of the* SPIRIT. And the figure is beautiful also on another account, in respect to the free agency of the air: *The wind bloweth where it listeth.* So GOD the SPIRIT displays the sovereignty of his Almighty Power, in coming; *when*, and *where*, and *how;* as seemeth good to his holy will and pleasure. But how is every one who is made the happy partaker of such distinguishing mercy constrained to join the Apostle's hymn of praise, and say with him, *Thanks be unto* GOD *for his unspeakable gift.* 2 Cor. ix. 15. On the subject of Regeneration, see Titus iii. 4, 5.

If I detain the Reader one moment longer on this blessed discourse of the LORD JESUS, it shall be only to call his attention to what the LORD hath said, when declaring that, *Except a man be born of water and of the* SPIRIT, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of* GOD. But what water are we to suppose that our LORD meant? Not surely the common elementary water of the earth! Would JESUS have classed this upon a level with GOD the HOLY GHOST? Yea, have put the water in precedency before Him! One of the creatures of GOD before the Infinite Creator? Moreover, how can a man be said to be born of water? Born of the SPIRIT every new-born child of GOD is said to be: (John i. 12, 13.) but is there a possibility of what is *Spiritual*, being

born of what is wholly *natural?* Can any man for a moment suppose, that such was our LORD's meaning?

Though in this, and all other questionable points, I beg to be understood as never speaking decidedly; yet I think, if the Reader will call to mind the record of *John*, when at the foot of the cross, he tells the Church, that he saw blood and water streaming from the body of CHRIST, when his sacred side was pierced by the soldier's spear; (see John xix. 34, 35.) and if to this view he will add the further testimony of *John* which he hath given in one of his Epistles, that CHRIST *came, by water and blood;* (1 John v. 6.) perhaps he will be inclined to think with me, that it is CHRIST himself, and not the elementary water of nature, which he hath joined together in his blessed scripture, of being *born of water, and of the* SPIRIT. Certain it is, that the blood of CHRIST is sometimes in scripture spoken of by the name of water; as in that memorable passage of Ezekiel xxxvi. 25. and that it is *blood*, and not *water*, which is intended by the expression, is evident; because, GOD promiseth to sprinkle it upon the people. Water is never said to be *sprinkled*, nor *put upon* the people: but CHRIST's blood in justification, is said to be sprinkled; and the Church is said to *be come to the blood of sprinkling*. Heb. xii. 24. But when water is at any time spoken of in allusion to GOD the HOLY GHOST, it is as a spring, not *without* us but *within* us. Hence CHRIST, giving this promise, saith; *The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life.* John iv. 14.

Neither can the term, of being *born of water* and of the SPIRIT, be in the smallest degree connected with the idea of *water baptism.* That man must be very weak in understanding, or very strong in prejudice, who for a moment can suppose, that water baptism, either in children or in adults, hath any regenerating efficacy. Surely common sense must know, that the baptism of the HOLY GHOST is wholly unconnected with any thing and every thing, of a material nature. When the Apostles were baptised with the HOLY GHOST on the day of *Pentecost*, agreeably to our LORD's most sure promise, (See Acts i. 5.) we read of no water-baptism accompanying that divine out-pouring. And we no where before in the history of those men, trace the shadow of their being baptised after JESUS called them. If it be said, yes! it is probable that some of them were disciples of *John the Baptist* before that they followed CHRIST; and therefore might have been baptised by him. To which I answer: this would only tend to strengthen what I have said. For *Paul*, when taught of GOD the HOLY GHOST, was instructed to inform the Church, that *John's* baptism never was intended to set forth more than *the doctrine of repentance.* It was designed, *Paul* saith, to lead them to CHRIST. For *John* saith, that *they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on* CHRIST JESUS. (See Acts xix. 1—6.) Hence it must undeniably follow, that *water-baptism* of every kind, could not be what JESUS insisted upon, for an entrance into the kingdom of GOD. And, indeed, the thing itself is fully proved. For baptism by water was altogether a novel service in the Church of GOD, until introduced by *John the Baptist.* And if this became so essentially necessary, that without it there could be no entrance into GOD's kingdom; what became of the whole body of Old Testament saints, which never heard of it?

Is it not (for I simply ask the question) to be apprehended by what we see in life, that *many*, whether men or children, may be baptized with water-baptism, and yet remain everlasting strangers to the gift of the HOLY GHOST. While on the other hand, *others*, who never knew, either of the infant or adult baptism by water; have enjoyed the blessing of regeneration, and been truly baptized with the HOLY GHOST? No one I presume will venture to doubt but that *the dying Thief* on the cross, was made a rich partaker of the HOLY GHOST, and had the baptisms of the SPIRIT: and yet no elementary water accompanied the blessing. But (awful to relate) *Simon Magus* was fully baptized in the due form of the Apostles' baptism, with water of the earth; and no saving work of GOD the SPIRIT was wrought in his heart: for he continued *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*. Acts viii. 9—24. But I add no more. The LORD himself be the teacher, both of the Writer and Reader, to the right apprehension of those words of JESUS.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;

17 For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already,

because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

I must not in a *Poor Man's Commentary* swell our pages, even though it be the words of JESUS that we are here attending to. What a lovely and sweet discourse is this of our LORD! Every verse is a sermon. But let me call the Reader's attention to those *two* most striking passages in the midst of it: I mean, first, of what JESUS hath said of his ascension, and descension, and everlasting presence in heaven; and, secondly, of what the LORD hath said in relation to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness.

The former of these passages will, I apprehend, appear very plain and obvious, if we consider the words as CHRIST delivered them, relating wholly to the SON *of Man;* that is, GOD-Man, CHRIST JESUS. *No man* but the GOD-Man, hath either ascended, or descended, in the character and office work of JEHOVAH'S servant, to make known the Being, Perfections, and Love, of JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, to the Church. It is He, and He only, which lay in the bosom of the FATHER, hath come forth to declare Him. For though *Enoch* and *Elijah* simply as men, had special tokens of divine favor, in being translated to heaven, different from the common mass of *the spirits of just men made perfect;* yet none but CHRIST could act in this high capacity, from being GOD and Man, in one Person, of making known JEHOVAH. The office was solely and properly his, and no other: Matt. xi. 27. And hence that question of CHRIST: John vi. 62.

And in respect to the everlasting presence of *the* SON *of Man,* as such in heaven; nothing can be plainer, than that it means, his everlasting representation in Covenant engagements there. He hath been so from the first, in the eternal counsel. The expression is similar to what is said, Proverbs viii. 22—31. CHRIST there, speaking in his wisdom character, saith; *The* LORD *possessed me from the beginning of his ways. I was set up from everlasting. And my delights were with the sons of men.* And this was said at a time, not only before the SON of GOD became incarnate, but before the foundations of the earth were laid. How was he then possessed? And how set up; and his delights with the sons of men? Evidently in the representation of all these grand events, planned and brought forward in the eternal counsel; and to be accomplished in the fulness of time. So that in fact, the things were as good as done, which in JEHOVAH'S mind were

determined upon. And in this sense CHRIST's presence as SON of Man, was everlastingly in heaven. A similar passage we have, Coloss. i. 15, &c. See John i. 2, 3. and observations thereon. As also *Poor Man's Commentary* on Coloss. i. &c.—That the passage must be understood in this light, or somewhat like it, is evident from hence. For it cannot refer to the divine nature of the SON of GOD *only*; because, as GOD, he is every where present. The LORD filleth all space; and is no more present in heaven than on earth. Neither as man *only*, would it have been correct. For CHRIST in his human nature, was at that time conversing with *Nicodemus* upon the earth. But all difficulties are at once removed, if the expression be considered as speaking of CHRIST, in his high representing character, the SON of Man; the *Head of his body, the Church:* for here he evidently becomes that *fulness which filleth all in all.* Ephes. i. 22, 23.

In respect to the *latter* of these passages in our LORD's sermon, where JESUS speaks of the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness; I beg the Reader to attend to the subject with that due regard so beautiful a representation of CHRIST in the type evidently sets forth. According to my view, it is one of the most blessed shadows of CHRIST in the Bible; and I have found cause, very often, to thank GOD the HOLY GHOST for it.

For the better apprehension of the subject, I beg the Reader to remark with me, that among the several office-characters of CHRIST; there were *two*, more immediately express, and striking. The *one* was, that He who knew no *sin*, should be made *sin* for his people: that they, who knew in themselves no righteousness, should be made the righteousness of GOD in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. The *other* was, that as the Church, by the Adam-fall, came justly under the sentence of GOD's *curse;* CHRIST, as the husband and surety of his people, should be made a *curse* for them; that they might be redeemed from it. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Heb. ii. 17. And both these the SON of GOD in our nature, in what is called the fulness of time, undertook to do: and hath done most completely and effectually. But before the accomplishment of CHRIST's undertaking, that Old Testament saints might not lose the just apprehension of New Testament blessings, the HOLY GHOST was pleased to appoint, that these things should be shadowed out, in lively type, and figure. Hence the *Scape-Goat* was appointed on the day of atonement, to set forth the *former*, and the *Brazen Serpent* to manifest the *latter:* and both directly pointing to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and in Him alone, to have their accomplishment. And while the *Scape Goat* became so very direct and pointed, that no Israelite whose eyes were opened, could overlook CHRIST, as bearing the sins of his people, *the Brazen Serpent*, the only creature of GOD, declared cursed at the fall, was expressly suited to prefigure Him, who bore both the weight, and displeasure, due to the sins of his Church; in the curse of GOD's broken law, and the indignation which became justly due thereon. And thus the LORD JESUS explains it. As the type was lifted up, that the dying Israelite might look with an eye of hope to it, as GOD's own appointed way, and be healed: so now, the thing signified, even CHRIST himself, which is the sole method of redemption, and appointed by JEHOVAH, is lifted up, that the dying sinner might look to Him with an eye of faith, and be saved. Isaiah xlv. 22.

I hope that the Reader will be led by the HOLY GHOST, to enjoy with me the blessedness of this subject, explained as it is to the Church, by the LORD JESUS himself.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem; because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness; behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him.*

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

We have here a short, but sweet sermon, of John the Baptist. And I beg the Reader to remark with me, how blessedly he preacheth CHRIST. How beautifully he sets him forth, as the glorious Bridegroom of his Church! What a striking distinction he draws, between the LORD JESUS and all his servants! And how could he do this as effectually, as when stating the vast difference in the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. In all the servants of the LORD, the HOLY GHOST was in them as portions in a vessel. *To every one of us* (saith an Apostle) *is given grace according to the measure of the gift of* CHRIST. Ephes. iv. 7. In CHRIST, as a fountain, GOD *giveth not the* SPIRIT *by measure unto him.* And let not the Reader overlook what is further said. What CHRIST hath seen and heard in coming from above, he testifieth; yea, he speaketh the words of GOD, for he is GOD. And all things are given unto him, as Mediator; eternal life, with all its preliminaries. Reader! pause, and think! How sure is that soul of blessedness, who hath the SON? How sure the certain consequence of misery, to every one, which hath not the SON? For the wrath of GOD, not taken away by CHRIST, remaineth! Oh! for grace that while the LORD's people set to their seal that GOD is true, GOD the HOLY GHOST may set to his seal in our souls, *the seal of the promise!* Ephes. i. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

EVERLASTING praise to thee, my honored LORD, for the sweet and precious doctrine of the New-birth, so graciously taught thy Church, in this discourse with *Nicodemus.* Oh! for the distinguishing grace of GOD the SPIRIT upon my heart, that I may have all the blessed testimonies, in the assurance of it there; that I may not only know it, in the written word, but enjoy it in the engrafted word; to make me *wise unto salvation through the faith which is in* CHRIST JESUS.

Do thou, dearest LORD, accompany those thine heavenly discourses, with thine Almighty grace; that from the words of my LORD, and the commissioned discourse of his servant the Baptist, my soul may receive the truth, and the truth may make me free. JESUS hath all things in his Almighty hand. May I then LORD look to thee for all things, in grace, mercy, pardon, peace, and every New Covenant blessing here; and all the fulness of glory in JESUS, and from JESUS, to all eternity!

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

CHRIST *discourseth with a Woman of* Samaria. *He visits the* Samaritans. *Many believe on him. He healeth a Nobleman's Son.*

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

I pause at these verses, just to remark what appears to me highly proper to be noticed. JESUS *himself baptized not.* Was it not, (I ask the question, but do not decide,) because that this was the peculiar office of GOD the HOLY GHOST? Had CHRIST baptized, surely it would not have been (as all his servants are confined to) water baptism only. The question is of moment. I leave it with the Reader.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well. And it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain: and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God *is* a spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee *am* he.

27 ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them. And he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Were I to enter into a full comment upon this interesting interview of CHRIST with this woman of *Samaria*, it would fill very many pages; and after all I should leave unnoticed, as all Commentators gone before have done, numberless precious things contained in it. I must therefore pass over the consideration of what is *generally* brought forward by our LORD, to the Reader's own observation; praying, and hoping, that GOD the HOLY GHOST will sweetly open the whole, and bring home our LORD's words to his heart, as he did to the woman of *Samaria*, and many of her countrymen; and render his own most blessed discourse profitable, by his own most gracious power. Some few of the more prominent features contained in this sermon of JESUS, I beg the Reader to remark with me; and may the LORD write them on our hearts. And, first: it is not the least subject of moment to observe, the *needs be*, which is said for JESUS going through *Samaria*. It is true indeed that if CHRIST was going into *Galilee*, (see verse 43,) as he now came out of *Judæa*, he could go no other way. But it doth not follow, that there was a necessity that he should go at that time into *Galilee*. But whatever other causes there might be to this constraint, the conversion of this woman to the faith of CHRIST, and certain of her countrymen also, became sufficient cause. This was the time, the place, the manner, the method, and the whole train of events, linked in the chain with it; which, from all eternity had been marked for CHRIST's calling to himself this woman, and other *Samaritans*, who were effectually wrought upon, to the knowledge and belief of JESUS. Reader! what a sweet thought is it, that all things are arranged with infinite wisdom, for all the purposes of CHRIST's Church and people, *in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of* GOD. What the world calls chance, and accident; the believer cannot admit in his creed. Every thing, from the numbering of the hairs of our head, to the bringing home the Church to glory, is arranged, ordered, and appointed; and to a minuteness, which nothing can counteract, by the stratagem of men, or devils. Dan. iv. 35. Rom. xi. 36.

The conversation which took place at the well, between JESUS and this woman, I pray the Reader to observe, began with our LORD. Yes! all the overtures of grace come first *from* the LORD. 1 John iv. 19. But what wonderful discoveries the LORD made to her of herself. He unrips her very heart, and lays open to her, some of her most secret sins. He next reveals to her himself, and sweetly inclines her affection to feel her want of him, and to incline her heart to desire him. And so earnest was she when once these great things were done for her, that every poor sinner like herself should be made a partaker of such free rich mercy; that she forgot her errand at the well, left her water pot there, and ran to the city, with a pressing invitation to her countrymen to come and see JESUS! Reader! depend upon it, that such effects as this woman felt, will be, in the

instance of every poor sinner, whom the LORD by his SPIRIT, hath *convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.* Those *two* grand points, are always joined together. In the same moment that GOD the HOLY GHOST humbles the soul for sin; he leads that soul to feel the need of a SAVIOR. So that self-abhorrence, and CHRIST exalted, will always go together. I must not enlarge: but before I quit this most important view of the subject, I entreat the Reader for his further conviction on this point, to read the certain truth of it, in the lives of holy men of old. What said *Job*, when he had seen GOD in CHRIST. *Behold I am vile*, (said he,) *what shall I answer thee: I will lay my hand upon my mouth!* Job xl. 4. See also xlii. 5, 6. What said *Isaiah*, after he had been admitted to a view of that glorious vision, of the glory of CHRIST: *Woe is me*, (said he,) *I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips; mine eyes have seen the King, the* LORD *of hosts.* Isaiah vi. 1—5, compared with John xii. 41. What said *David*, Psm. cxliii. 2. What said *Paul*, Romans vii. 23, 24. Reader! such will the best of men say, when once the HOLY GHOST hath opened to their view their own vileness, and the LORD'S holiness!

And, Reader! do allow me to lead you into an enquiry, before you quit the subject; that you may ask your own heart, whether you have met the LORD GOD *of the Hebrews*, as this woman did, and he hath made similar discoveries to your conscience, as he did to hers. Have you seen sin, exceeding sinful? Have you seen CHRIST exceeding precious? Hath JESUS truly discoursed with you by his SPIRIT: and have you with Him by faith? If you have met with CHRIST in this most blessed saving way, then do you know him as he is: the CHRIST of GOD, the Sent of GOD, and One with GOD; so that you can truly say with holy men of old, *We believe, and are sure, that thou art* CHRIST *the* SON *of the living* GOD! John vi. 69. Nothing short of this knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and this knowledge of yourself, can enable you to do as this woman did; believe on him for yourself, and commend him to others. Oh! for grace, in this CHRIST-despising day, and generation, so to know the LORD, and so to believe in him, for life and salvation, that like this woman, we may be able to invite others from heart-felt joy; and like the *Samaritans* under the same heart-felt conviction, to say: *Now we believe, not because of the saying of another, but from having heard him ourselves; and know that He is indeed the* CHRIST, *the* SAVIOR *of the world!*

43 ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a

certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth. And himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

The departure of JESUS into *Galilee*, it should seem, was not because of the little honor paid him; for the LORD was prepared for all this: Isaiah liii. 1, &c. but for the manifestation of this act of grace, in healing a son's bodily infirmity, and giving comfort to a father's mind. And who shall say, what effects beside were wrought in the family and neighbourhood, by such a manifestation of CHRIST's power? The distance from *Capernaum* to *Galilee*, could not have been less, at the nearest extremity of both towns, to each other, than fourteen or fifteen miles. For JESUS therefore to have wrought this cure of the sick child, and that the hour in which the LORD bid the father go his way, his child was then healed, should exactly correspond as the father afterwards found, on enquiry to the time the child's fever left him; was in his view, such a proof of CHRIST's GODHEAD, as under the LORD's grace, ended in a conviction to the faith of the LORD JESUS. Reader! if our inattentive hearts were but more alive to such events as pass and repass in the present hour, in proof of the same in CHRIST's words; we should be not unfrequently overwhelmed, with the continued evidences. Isaiah lxi. Luke iv. 18, 19.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we have reason to believe, that the history of this woman of *Samaria*, handed down as it is, and hath been for ages past in the Church of GOD, hath been blessed to thousands. And what encouragement, indeed, doth such a record of grace hold forth, to poor sinners? Think how gracious the LORD dealt with this poor adulteress? How blessedly the view holds up CHRIST, to our love and adoration? Do not overlook what the LORD JESUS said to her as the sad cause CHRIST is so little regarded, and GOD's love in CHRIST so little known. Men do not know the gift of GOD. They have no apprehension that CHRIST is the remedy of GOD's own providing, for the wants of sinners. They neither know CHRIST in his Person, work, character, offices, and relationship to his Church; neither GOD's love in the free and full gift, he hath made of him, to the Church. But when GOD the HOLY GHOST, as in the case of this poor woman, opens to the sinner's view, who CHRIST is, both in himself, and in the gift of his FATHER; the heart and affections are won: and the soul's thirst for CHRIST is excited by the same power, and as blessedly assuaged, in the knowledge and love of him. *With the heart,* (saith the Apostle) *man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation!*

Methinks I could long for parents, and all that are interested in the temporal and everlasting interests of children, to do as this nobleman did; hasten to CHRIST, for their little ones. Behold! what a sweet miracle is here held forth, for the encouragement of all such. But how blessedly doth it preach to the believing parents of soul-sick children! Dearest LORD JESUS! did thy people but know thee more; how would thy courts be thronged, from day to day, in sending in petitions to the king! LORD, be it my portion, not to wait for signs and wonders; but faithfully to believe in thee, and all thy gracious promises, to the salvation of my soul!

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *visits the pool of Bethesda. He healeth one there, after thirty and eight years disease. He preacheth most blessedly to the Jews.*

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

I beg the Reader at this verse to remark with me, that *John* is the only Evangelist, which hath noticed all the *Passovers* during our LORD's ministry; and he hath marked down every one. And it is by virtue of this record, how unimportant soever it might otherwise appear, that we are able to calculate the length of CHRIST's going in and out before the people, from his baptism to his cross: which was just *three years and half.* The *first* Passover is noted John ii. 13. This mentioned in this verse, was the *second.* The *third,* John vi. 4. And the *fourth* and last, John xviii. 28. The LORD JESUS attending them,

and what he said, particularly about the last, Luke xxii. 14, 15. will serve to shew, how much he prized Ordinances. Psm. lxxxvii. 2. And when he did away the Passover by his death, how graciously he instituted the holy supper in its place; as if to say, he expected all his family frequently to meet him there. 1 Cor. v. 7. and xi. 26.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-*market*, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk.

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Concerning this Pool, if we consult the Old Testament, we shall find some light thrown upon it, as to its situation, near the field of *Kidron*. John xviii. 1. *Nehemiah,* and *Jeremiah,* seem to have had it in view. See Nehem. iii. 1. 32.—Jerem. xxxi. 38, 39. It was not a *market* for sheep, but rather a sheep gate, or fold, near it; where, probably, the cattle were pent up for sacrifice. And the Pool, probably formed from the waters of *Shiloah.* Isaiah viii. 6. But I would rather call the attention of the Reader to some of the very interesting subjects, which are proposed to us, in our LORD's visit to the Pool, and the miracle JESUS wrought there.

Is it not highly probable, (for I do not speak decidedly,) that as this pool possessed this miraculous quality *John* describes, when excited by the ministry of the angel, that during the long dark night, in which no open vision was made, from the time of *Malachi* to *Zacharias;* the LORD was pleased to appoint this pool, as a standing monument in his Church; that the LORD was still watching over them, and *had not cast away his people whom he foreknew?* Rom. xi. 1, 2. And was it not to keep alive in the minds of his chosen, by the miracle itself, that He would come, who was *a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem?* Zech. xiii. 1. Under those views, they certainly became no unapt representation of spiritual mercies, in the thing itself; and much of the LORD JESUS, in his Person and offices, might have been veiled under it.

The name of *Bethesda,* or House of Mercy, is near a-kin to *Bethel,* or House of GOD. And as both are only mediums, or channels, for conveying blessings from the LORD to his people; the house of GOD and the house of Mercy, becomes one and the same. But as in this pool of *Bethesda,* the descent of the angel was needful, to give efficacy to the water; so the presence of the LORD in his house, is necessary, to make it blessed.

The pool of *Bethesda,* however, fell far short of the LORD's *Bethels.* In this pool, it was but one at a season, which could be benefited. But JESUS in his gospel ordinances, hath blessings for all, who through the Spirit come to GOD by him. Those means of grace far exceed the waters of the Prophet's vision. They not only extend in blessedness from *Engedi to En-eglaim;* but, when impregnated by the descent of the HOLY GHOST, they reach from *sea to sea; and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* Ezek. xlvii. 1—10. Psm. lxxii. 8.

I admire the very interesting account *John* hath given, of the many diseased and miserable objects, which lay around the pool, in those cloisters, waiting for the moment of healing. Blind, halt, withered; all descriptive of the totally blind, halt, and helpless state of our fallen nature: yea, dead in trespasses and sins. Reader! surely in beholding this groupe of miserable objects, we discover the whole race of Adam-nature. And though those *five porches* might contain the whole of that neighbourhood, yet the globe itself is but as one great hospital of human woe. But what a mercy, when JESUS the Angel of

the Covenant descends in the midst, under that endearing character, JEHOVAH ROPHE, to heal. Malachi iii. 1. Exod. xv. 26.

It were needless to run over the several particulars enumerated in the account of the *Bethesda*: neither of the one, the LORD singled out to manifest his mercy more particularly upon. No grace like distinguishing grace: neither are there any mercies which come home to the heart, with sweetness of so high a nature, as those which are personal and direct. How it must have struck every beholder, when the LORD JESUS singled out this man? And though he had been eight and thirty years in waiting for a cure; yet it was well worth waiting for, when the LORD JESUS thus came at length in person, to heal him; and chose him from among all the crippled, and sinew-shrank objects of misery around, to manifest his grace upon. And, Reader! if it be so, in natural things; what must it be in spiritual? If the blessing, from its distinguishing nature, be so valuable to the body; what must it be to the soul?

I will only detain the Reader, with a short observation on what the LORD JESUS said to this man, when he afterwards found him in the temple. *Sin no more*, (said CHRIST,) *lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Did this precept of JESUS refer to his *bodily* complaint, as if, (which is indeed the case,) both sickness and death are the effect of sin? In this sense, our LORD's words will be, to avoid every thing which in its nature is sinful, and which hath a tendency, in the present state of things, to induce disease in the body. But, under an impression that this man was a child of GOD, of which there appears nothing to the contrary; and though not expressly said, (as in some other miracles JESUS wrought, is taken notice of: See Luke xiii. 16. and Luke xix. 9.) seems probable, I should rather be inclined to think, our LORD referred to the case of his soul. And then the subject becomes more abundantly interesting, to discover what was the express object of our LORD's caution to him.

We cannot suppose that the LORD meant to say, that if he fell into a single transgression, he would lose thereby the LORD's favor, and come under condemnation, not to be pardoned. For *James* saith, *in many things we offend all.* And *John* adds, that *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* James iii. 2. 1 John i. 8. Neither could the LORD mean, that such an after act of transgression, when a soul had been regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, would destroy that renewing of the SPIRIT, and subject the soul to everlasting death. For *there is not a just man* (that is, a truly justified soul in CHRIST,) *upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.* Eccles. vii. 20. And *a just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth up again.* PROV. xxiv. 16.

But though a child of GOD cannot forfeit, by any act of his, what was never bestowed upon him, for any deservings of his; but is the result of GOD's grace, and not man's merit; yet he may have a much worse thing of soul befal him, than any calamity of the body. Though he cannot, when justified freely, lose GOD's favor, yet he may be under great sorrow of heart, from the want of the light of GOD's countenance. Holy men of old, groaned bitterly under such a state, in their seasons of soul exercise. *While I suffer thy terrors*, (said one of them,) *I am distracted.* Psm. lxxxviii. 15. And another cried out in anguish of spirit; *The terrors of* GOD *do set themselves*

in array against me. Job. vi. 4. And who that reads *David's* groans under sin, will conceive, that any bodily pain could equal them. Psm. li. throughout. Reader! do not such views form the best comment to our LORD's advice to his patient in the Temple.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them;* even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man; but these things I say that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me, ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

No doubt the poor man concluded, that the Jews would rejoice in the information that it was the LORD JESUS who had healed him. How little did he know of human nature! Very different is CHRIST's account. Verse 44, chap. xii. xxxix. xl. Very different also the testimony of the HOLY GHOST. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

This precious discourse of CHRIST is in itself so very plain, that it can need no comment. I shall therefore only detain the Reader with a few short observations upon it, which under the divine teaching, may be made helpful, both to the Writer and Reader, in attending to some of its beauties.

And, *first*, I beg the Reader to remark with me, how blessedly our LORD insists upon his own eternal Power and GODHEAD; and with what indignation the Jews received it. That the LORD JESUS preached this grand momentous truth himself: and that the Jews understood it as such; is as plain and palpable a fact, as any in the Bible. And when they charged him with blasphemy, for so doing; the LORD confirms what he had said, with a double Amen: that is, His own most blessed name as *the faithful and true witness*. Rev. iii. 14. Reader! what an awful thought is it, that while JESUS asserts it, proves it, and confirms it; and the Jews actually brought him to the cross for it: (John xix. 7.) many who call themselves by his sacred name, deny it. Oh! the delusion of every mind untaught of GOD. See John x. 30.

Secondly: In this divine discourse of JESUS, we discover no less, how blessedly the LORD speaks in his Office-character, as GOD-Man Mediator. Reader! I pray you not only in this place, but in every part of our LORD's discourses, when speaking in similar language to what he here useth, to note it down as a very sweet, precious, and incontrovertible truth; that JESUS is thus to be considered in his twofold nature: GOD and Man, in one Person, Mediator. Hence, he saith: *The* SON *can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the* FATHER *do.* Hence CHRIST speaks of having life given to him in himself; as the FATHER hath life in himself. And hence he hath power and authority given to him to execute judgment, raise the dead, and to quicken whom he will. That all these things, and every other of a like nature, CHRIST thus exerciseth; are in his Office-character, as GOD-Man Mediator, is evident from hence: they could not be said of Him as GOD *only;* for as GOD, all were his own by right in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST. Neither could they be said of Him as man *only:* for such powers as are said to be in the possession and exercise of JESUS as are here, and elsewhere described, are beyond all human excellency, unconnected with divine. But when considered, as CHRIST all along is, and must be considered, GOD, and man united, in One Person, every difficulty is removed.

Reader! pause over the sweet view. And though as our LORD told the Jews in this very Chapter, when speaking of his FATHER; as it may be said, and must be said, to every unregenerated sinner upon earth: *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape;* yet every child of GOD, in whose heart GOD that commanded the light at the old creation of nature to shine out of darkness, hath shined in the new creation of grace, hath given the light of the knowledge, both of GOD's voice, and shape, in the face of JESUS CHRIST. For the invisibility of JEHOVAH, in his threefold nature of Person, is made known, as far as any revelation can be made known, in time and to all eternity, in the Person of the GOD-Man CHRIST JESUS. For all the glory of JEHOVAH capable of being manifested, is manifested in Him. And it is in this high character of GOD-Man Mediator, making known JEHOVAH, which CHRIST is here speaking of, through all, and in all, the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory.

One word more on this blessed discourse of the LORD JESUS. As JESUS is here chiefly speaking in his Mediator-character, and the several glorious offices in which he is said here to act; as the giver of life, the quickener of dead and living, and the sole judge to whom all judgment is committed, are every one of them His, by virtue of Covenant settlements: what an endearment of CHRIST's Person do they bring with them, to the hearts of all his people? Reader! do not fail to connect with those views of CHRIST, the interest which all his members have in them. As the head of his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all;* he communicates all that is communicable of gifts, and graces, and royalties, and the whole members of his body, are made blessed in him and by him. As in this union of nature, he hath all power in heaven and earth; so is He at the head of all principality and power, both for the final destruction of his enemies, and the gathering together to himself his friends. Ephes. i. 10. It is his, to have life in himself, and to communicate life to others. His to save, and his to destroy. His to keep from going down to the pit

of hell; and his to cast into it. And what makes both the Person and the Power of JESUS so exceedingly dear, under all these, and every other, in his office-character, is, that all authority is given him to execute judgment; *because he is the* SON *of Man.* Not because he is the SON of GOD; for had this been the case, as hath been before observed, it was impossible as GOD he could have had any of these *given* him. But it was, and is, in his Mediator-character, GOD and Man, in one Person. Reader! never dismiss the sweet thought! He that is to be the final judge of quick and dead, is now, and will be then, the Church's Brother, Head, Surety, and Husband! Oh! the preciousness of those scriptures! See John vi. 62.—I must no longer trespass. May He of whom I speak, unveil all and every other of his gracious characters, to the heart.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Mediator! do thou still continue by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to visit the *Bethesdas* of Ordinances, among thy people; and as in the instance of this poor man, the longest and most inveterate diseases, induced by the Adam-nature of our fallen state, will be done away, when JESUS speaks the soul-quickening, the health-restoring word, to his people.

I desire to praise thee my honored LORD, for this sweet and blessed discourse of thine, thou hast caused to be left on record; for the joy and consolation of thy Church. What the infidel and unbelieving Jews of old, and all of modern times, which they say are Christians, and are not, call blasphemy, all the regenerated family of CHRIST embrace, as from the faithful and true witness in his own testimony, when he said, *I and my* FATHER *are One.* And must it not be then as GOD the FATHER hath appointed, that all should honor the SON, even as they honor the FATHER? Oh! for grace to honor JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, in, and through, and by the GOD-Man CHRIST Jesus. And do thou, dearest LORD, unceasingly bless and refresh my soul in the view of all thy powers, that they are thine, and thine to execute, because thou art the SON of Man.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

JESUS feedeth a Multitude in the Wilderness. He retireth to a Mountain. At Night he walketh on the Sea. He preacheth to the People.

AFTER these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias:

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto the disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

If the Reader observes what is here said of the approach of the Passover, and compares it with the opening of the last Chapter, he will perceive, that there must have been very little less than a

whole year have passed between the one and the other. Here, therefore, we must bring in to our recollection what the other Evangelists have recorded of that portion in the life and ministry of CHRIST. The sea of *Galilee*, the same with what *Luke* calls *Gennesareth*, Luke v. 1. was made memorable upon many occasions for the manifestation of our LORD's glory, Luke v. 1—11. particularly after he arose from the dead. John xxi. 1. I do not swell the page with observations on this miracle of JESUS feeding the multitude. I sometimes purposely use shortness, (and I beg the Reader to remember it,) in order that he may be led to seek with more earnestness for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Let me therefore upon the present occasion, in addition to what hath been already said, Matt. xiv. 14. Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 12. only observe, that the compassion of JESUS, manifested at those seasons, in working a miracle to supply the pressing wants of the body, and for a multitude, which the LORD then knew, and afterwards proved, were none of His, in the covenant of redemption, (see verse 66.) should be a constant source of comfort, both for the wants of body and soul, to his people, during the whole of their time-state upon earth. My brother! I would say to every child of GOD, let nothing tempt you to cast away your faith, or suffer you to be cast down with fear; both your bread that perisheth with using, and that which endureth to everlasting life, shall be given, and your water sure. Isaiah xxxiii. 16. Remember CHRIST's own words, *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and* GOD *feedeth them! how much are ye better than the fowls?* Read the whole passage, for it is very sweet. Luke xii. 22—40.

15 ¶ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea, toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the

ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

How little did the multitude know, that JESUS was indeed JEHOVAH's king in *Zion*, which from everlasting had been set up in the decrees of covenant engagements! How little was CHRIST known then, and how little even now, by many that follow him and profess themselves to be Christians, but are no more so than by name! I do not think it necessary to notice in this place again, what hath been observed in the relation of the same account by *Matthew*. See chap. xiv. 24. But I beg the Reader both then and now, not to lose sight of such a demonstration of CHRIST's GODHEAD, by two such mighty acts, as walking upon the sea, and causing the arrival of the ship the moment he entered it, to be at the destined place the disciples had embarked for. And doth not JESUS now in spirit walk over all the stormy dispensations of his people, to come to their relief? And doth he not after bring them home, long before their expectations, when through fire and water he brings them through into a wealthy place? Psm. lxvi. 12.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

23 Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks:

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert: as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves:

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my

blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

I have thought it right not to break the thread of our LORD's discourse, but to go through it, and then propose a few general observations at the close, which may the LORD graciously make profitable.

And, *first*, I pray the Reader to remark with me, the wonderful sublimity of our LORD's words. How evidently they manifested the greatness of his Almighty character. What Prophet, what Apostle, what servant of JEHOVAH ever made use of such language! *I am the bread of life, the living bread of* GOD, *which came down from heaven. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever!* Carnal, unawakened men, may, as the Jews did, mistake the blessedness of our LORD's words, and cry out, *how can this man give us his flesh to eat?* But, every truly regenerated believer, will enter into the full apprehension of our LORD's meaning, and say with the Apostles, *Lord! evermore give us this bread!*

I detain the Reader to observe with me the beauty and aptness of the similitude. As the common bread is the staff of the body, so CHRIST, the heavenly bread, is the life of the soul. And, as the body cannot subsist without daily food, so neither can the soul without her spiritual support in CHRIST. Yea, the soul hath more need for CHRIST, in his person, fulness, and grace, than the body hath for the bread that perisheth. For, put the case to the worst, that by reason of a famine of bread, the body languisheth and dieth, it is but a death a little premature, and which would otherwise have died in due time. But the soul without CHRIST, the bread of life, must famish for ever, and though existing, lives only to eternal misery.

Reader! see, I beseech you, the vast and infinite importance of feeding spiritually on CHRIST. Oh! how sweet a life of faith, to be thus eyeing CHRIST, and knowing CHRIST to be the bread of life! To feel a daily longing for him, an hungring for him, as the keen appetite of an healthy laboring man doth for his daily food. It was thus holy men of old longed for CHRIST. They felt their need of

him. They found their souls satisfied in him, and as one of them expressed it, so all of them enjoyed it, more panting for CHRIST than the hart for the water brooks. Reader, do not dismiss this part of our LORD's discourse, until that you have well pondered it over, and consulted those scriptures. Psm. xlii. and xliii. Ephes. iii. 17. Psm. lxxxix. 16. Hosea xiv. 8. Psm. lxiii.

I would beg the Reader next to notice that very precious part in this discourse of JESUS, where CHRIST speaks of his designation to the high office of Mediator. *For Him hath* GOD *the* FATHER *sealed.* Let it be observed, that within the compass of those *seven* words, is contained the office characters of the whole GODHEAD, in the appointment of the GOD-Man-Mediator. *Him,* that is, CHRIST, GOD *the* FATHER, that is, in his own peculiar personal character in the covenant. And sealing is the special act in the anointing of CHRIST by the HOLY GHOST. How sweet, how very sweet, and richly consolatory to the soul of a believer, is it to behold the joint act of the HOLY Three in One, in the mission of CHRIST JESUS? I pray the Reader to turn to a few scriptures in point, by way of confirmation. Isaiah xlii. 1—8. Psm. cx. 1—7. Heb. vii. 21—25. Acts x. 38. Isa. lxi. 1, &c. Luke iv. 18, 19. Heb. v. 1—5.

Let me lead the Reader by the hand, to a *third* improvement, which this most blessed discourse of JESUS teacheth. For when the Jews demanded what they should *do,* that they might *work the work of* GOD? JESUS made this remarkable answer, *This is the work of* GOD, (said JESUS,) that *ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* As if, and which in fact is truly the case, the whole work of GOD consists in a right belief and apprehension of GOD's dear SON. And small, as in some men's eyes these things may appear, it is the greatest work upon earth, and never wrought in any man's heart but by a miracle. It is indeed what CHRIST calls it, GOD's work, and not man's. It is inwrought by the SPIRIT of GOD in the heart. Oh! for grace, *to believe the record which* GOD *hath given of his Son!* 1 John v. 10, 11.

One word more, by way of improvement, from this divine discourse of JESUS. How truly blessed is it to learn from the lips of CHRIST himself, that the provision made for bringing home his whole redeemed, here in grace, and hereafter in glory, is so secure, that all whom the FATHER hath given him shall come to him; and him that cometh, JESUS will in no wise cast out. As Moses told Pharaoh, not an hoof should be left behind. Exod. x. 26. So here, the flocks must all again *pass under the hand of him that telleth them.* Jerem. xxxiii. 13. Nothing upon earth can be equal to the precious assurance of this most glorious truth. Neither can it fail, no, not in a single instance. The loss of one soul, for whom CHRIST died, and whom the FATHER gave to him, would tarnish the crown of the LORD JESUS CHRIST for ever. But the thing is impossible. It is founded in a covenant which is *ordered in all things and sure.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The tenor of the covenant is everlasting, and of perpetual efficacy, and in which GOD himself undertakes, both for himself, and for his people, *I will not, and they shall not.* Jer. xxxii. 40. And the LORD JESUS refers, in further confirmation of the soul-reviving truth, that as a testimony of divine teaching the coming to him proves it. *All the children shall be taught of* GOD, saith CHRIST. Then, saith JESUS, here is the evidence, *Every one that hath heard, and hath learned of*

the FATHER, *cometh unto me.* Reader! it will be a blessed fulfilment of CHRIST's words, if you and I, from being come to JESUS for life, and salvation, hereby prove no less, that *we are taught of* GOD! Isaiah liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. And this is to do what *John the Baptist* said, *to set to our seal that* GOD *is true.* John iii. 33.

I will only detain the Reader with one observation more, from this most blessed sermon of CHRIST, just to call his attention to what our LORD hath said, that *no man can come unto me,* (said JESUS,) *except the* FATHER, *which hath sent me, draw him!* There is somewhat very strong, both in the words of CHRIST, and the doctrine of CHRIST, as contained in this verse. *No man,* be his natural gifts whatsoever they may, or outward advantages of hearing GOD's word ever so many, *can,* in himself, find either a disposition or ability *to come* to JESUS, so as to believe in him, *except my* FATHER (that is, not to the exclusion of the quickenings of CHRIST, or the HOLY GHOST, for all the persons of the GODHEAD are included in the saving act,) *which hath sent me, draw him;* that is, secretly and sweetly incline the heart to come to JESUS. Reader! pause over the words. They are very sweet to a child of GOD, and very solemn to the carnal! The child of GOD discovers in the everlasting love of GOD, the sure drawings of the FATHER. See Jer. xxxi. 3. and take comfort. And, Reader, if GOD the FATHER draws his people to CHRIST, who or what shall ever draw them away? John x. 27—29.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this,* said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What,* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

What disciples were these which so expressed themselves? It could not be the Apostles. Neither was it any on whom a saving work of grace had been wrought in their heart. The word *disciple* is comprehensive of all that go after another. And, as our LORD told the great mass which followed him, that it was because they did eat

of the loaves, and were filled, for which they came to him, so when they found that such carnal enjoyments were not likely any longer to take place, they took offence, and called CHRIST's sayings hard. But, Reader! I pray you, do not overlook the occasion JESUS took from their murmuring to drop some most sweet and precious discourse concerning himself and his people. See John iii. 13. and Commentary.

66 ¶ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

I beg the Reader to mark well the character of those who are here said to have gone back, and walked no more with JESUS. Not the Apostles. Not a single one whom the FATHER had given to CHRIST, and in whose hearts a saving work of GOD the HOLY GHOST had been wrought. None of these are in the least hinted at. But the persons alluded to are the carnal and mere nominal disciples which followed JESUS, some, that they might eat of the loaves and fishes, and some which had hoped that CHRIST would set himself up as a king, to deliver the nation from the Roman yoke, under which they had long groaned. While these objects were in view, all such were ready to follow CHRIST. But when JESUS discountenanced all their hopes of a temporal kingdom, and in the stead of this world's opulence, spake of a cross, and self-denial to all which would follow him, their *Hosannahs* became soon changed into the cry of *Crucify him*. Reader! Is it not to be feared, from what we see daily in common life, that such instances are not singular? Is this heavenly preacher in reality better loved, in the present day of much profession, when the exalting wholly of CHRIST, and levelling to the dust all sinners, are made the sole subjects of his salvation? Do not all modern *Pharisees* equally revolt at the doctrine of a spiritual life in CHRIST, and a compleat self-loathing in the consciousness of their own total depravity before GOD?

I have often paused to admire the very tender, sweet, and gracious words of our LORD, to his few faithful followers, in the question, *will ye also go away?* Not as if JESUS had the smallest apprehension

of the departure of any, who, from the *gift* of his FATHER, and the *grace-union in himself* before all worlds, were secured in the covenant, and made *willing in the day of his power*. Ephes. i. 4. John vi. 37—40. Psm. cx. 3. And, as another blessed Scripture saith, JESUS well knew *what was in man*. John ii. 25. and *who should betray him*. John xiii. 11. But the words were sweetly expressive of the love and tenderness of the heart of JESUS to his own. It is as if JESUS had said, the departure of all that are gone is just as it should be. They none of them ever had any grace-union with me. John xvii. 9. But ye are mine.

And I admire the fervent zeal, and love, and attachment of *Peter*, expressed in the few, but striking words, he uttered on this occasion. And he spake as the mouth of the rest, that is, all but the traitor *Judas*. For it is plain, that at this time, and for a considerable space after, not one of the faithful Apostles had the smallest suspicion of the infamy of this awful man. And how must they have been struck with the LORD's answer to *Peter: Have not I chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil!* Yes! chosen *twelve* to an outward office. But not the *whole* to inward grace. The whole twelve were indeed chosen to be Apostles. Luke vi. 13. But *Judas* obtained only *part*, as *Peter* afterward explained it, of this ministry. Acts i. 17. No part in the book of life. Never chosen in CHRIST by the FATHER, before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. The only part of a mere *office*, without union or communion in grace. Oh! the awfulness of such a state! [See Heb. vi. 4. and Commentary there.]

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! while I behold thee, my GOD and SAVIOR, as set forth in this Chapter, feeding the multitudes with the bread which perisheth with using, and becoming in the same moment to all thy people the living bread, imparting solid, substantial, soul-feeding, soul-nourishing food, for time, and for eternity; LORD, I praise thee for the distinguishing mercy, and beg of my GOD to excite in my heart such a craving appetite to be fed and nourished in the divine life, as none but CHRIST himself can satisfy! LORD! *evermore give me this bread! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon my soul, and it shall put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased!*

And art thou, dearest LORD, the sealed of the FATHER? Doth GOD the HOLY GHOST prove to thy people his anointings, both of the glorious Head, and also of his members? Oh! for grace thus to receive thee, thus to come to thee, since such a rich provision is made for all the FATHER hath given thee, to come. Yea, methinks I would have every poor, awakened, and sensible sinner, to come. Hear, my brother, what JESUS saith. They shall all come which are of this description and character. And sure I am JESUS will accept all that so come, for he here saith, that *he will in no wise cast them out*. LORD! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, behold! *we come unto thee, for thou art the* LORD *our* GOD! *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *keepeth the Feast of Tabernacles. He teacheth in the Temple. The Scribes and Pharisees are more and more enraged at him.*

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is alway ready.

7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

The feast of tabernacles was one of the three great Jewish festivals in the Church. Levit. xxiii. 39. Deut. xvi. 16. The brethren of JESUS here spoken of, were not his brethren in grace, neither in nature, for *Joseph* was not the real, but the reputed father of CHRIST. Neither is it certain that *Mary* had any other child. See Matt. xii. 46. and Commentary. And those who are called brethren of CHRIST, were the sons of *Alpheus*, the brother of *Joseph*, and according to Jewish customs, from being brought up with CHRIST were called brethren, and these were all believers; and *James*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*, were of the number of the Apostles. But I pass over the consideration of these things, as of lesser import, to attend to what is infinitely more interesting, the Person, and Work, and Offices of the LORD JESUS. This chapter is very highly interesting on this point.

10 ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him. For some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

14 ¶ Now, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers,) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him, do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not,

29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him; will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

It is very blessed to behold CHRIST going up to keep this ordinance, in the fulfilling the whole law. And we have abundant reason to bless him that he did, for the Church would have lost this divine Sermon, which this chapter records, had he not gone there. Yea, indeed, as this was the last public preaching of JESUS, at the feast of tabernacles, it merits the attention of his people the more, as being decisive to the great points of his doctrine.

I need not go over the several features of it. The language of our LORD is designed, as it was delivered, for popular use; and, like the Prophet's vision, *he that runs may read it.* But I beg to make one observation upon it, which I hope may not be unprofitable. It is blessed to see that then, as now, though CHRIST himself was the preacher, the same effects always follow. To some it is *the savor of life unto life*; to others *of death unto death.* And JESUS himself hath assigned the cause. *My sheep* (saith he) *hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* John x. 27. But to the ungodly, the LORD saith, *Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of* GOD. John viii. 47.

37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given;* because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

40 ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ, but some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him: but no man laid hands on him.

I would beg to pause over this short but powerful sermon of JESUS, on the last day of the feast. The LORD knew that all his public ministry was now closing. He stood therefore and cried. Reader! I pray you to turn to Prov. viii. 1 to the end. Isaiah lv. 1—4. Rev. iii. 20. And let it not be forgotten, that as CHRIST ended his public preaching with this cry, so did the HOLY GHOST close the sacred canon of scripture with words to the same effect. Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

I leave the Reader to form his own conclusions as to the result of such powerful preaching on the minds of the people. We read indeed of the different effects. Some were overawed, like the buyers and

sellers in the temple, for the moment, and said, *of a truth this is the Prophet.* Others, hardened, still contended that it could not be. And some, more daring than the rest, would have seized CHRIST. Reader! pause and contemplate the awful state of Adam-nature by the fall. Though JESUS sweetly gave the gracious invitation to the thirsty soul, yet we read of none that thirsted.

The observation of the Evangelist, which is inclosed within a parenthesis at the 39th verse, is worthy our closest regard. How blessed is it to have our LORD's words so fully explained, in reference to the HOLY GHOST. And how doubly blessed when kindred souls are made sensible of that influence, in their own experience? I beg the Reader to observe in this verse the word *given*, that it is in Italics, meaning that it is not in the original. And I would desire, with all due respect to the labors of our most able translators, to substitute for it rather the word *come:* for the HOLY GHOST was not indeed yet come in all that plenitude of power, in which he was to come after CHRIST's return to glory; but GOD the SPIRIT had always been in his Church, and manifesting grace to his people in all ages. The spirit of CHRIST, saith *Peter*, was in the Prophets, when *testifying beforehand of the sufferings of* CHRIST, *and the glory which should follow.* 1 Peter i. 11. And every child of GOD, under the Old Testament dispensation, as well as under the New, are alike partakers in his quickening, regenerating, and renewing mercy. Nehem. ix. 20. But, when it is said that the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, or come, it is meant in respect to that more open display of his Almighty power, which was reserved for the latter day glory, when those promises were to be eminently fulfilled. Isaiah xliv. 3—5. Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 1, &c. The kingdom of grace, in the ordination of the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, was to be introduced, with visible marks of the personality and GODHEAD of the HOLY GHOST, as the Almighty and Sovereign Minister in the Church of GOD. See John xiv. and Commentary.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?

49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (He that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 Doth our law judge *any* man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

Every word here is so plain as to need no comment. I only think it necessary to detain the Reader to enquire, whether he hath so heard the words of the LORD JESUS, as to say, as those men were compelled to say, *Never man spake like this man!* Every truly regenerated child of GOD feels constrained to say so. For, when a man is brought from the Adam-nature of sin and corruption, in which he, and every son of Adam was born, into a state of adoption and grace in CHRIST, he then knows *the joyful sound*, and is led to walk *in the light of* GOD's *countenance*. He will be the first to join in the same conviction, never man spake like the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS. And he will enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of what the LORD hath said, for he knows the truth by his own personal experience, *the words that I speak unto you*, (saith Jesus,) *they are Spirit, and they are Life.* John vi. 63. Reader! the grand question, as it concerns yourself, is, are they so to *you?* Oh! the blessedness of knowing and enjoying the quickening, life-giving, soul-renewing, soul-strengthening grace of GOD the SPIRIT, in daily, hourly communications from the LORD JESUS, and living *to* JESUS, by a life of faith on the SON of GOD! Our need of CHRIST will become a sweet and sanctified mercy, constraining to go to CHRIST for the supply of all that we need, and giving continual cause for running on errands to the LORD, to his mercy seat and pardon office, that we may be unceasingly receiving out of *his fulness and grace for grace!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold the glories of the LORD JESUS, as set forth in this chapter. Say! do not the accumulated testimonies to his eternal power and GODHEAD, shine like the rich constellation of the heavenly bodies, in one full cluster? And in his Mediator-character no less; behold, what rich and splendid proofs the LORD manifested, that his doctrine was of GOD! But yet we are told, that *even his brethren believed not on him!* How should they, who were no brethren in the grace-union of his body the Church, but only brethren in the Jewish nation and character, after the flesh? Ah! no. *All are not Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.* What hath the *Ishmaels*, and the *Esaus*, to do with the covenant? Oh! the distinguishing grace of GOD! oh! the blessedness of the children of promise!

Dearest LORD JESUS! do thou condescend still to come to our feasts, by the sweet manifestations of thy SPIRIT. For without thy presence, the richest ordinances have no savor. All the stars in the firmament to our world, will not make one sun. And where JESUS, the Sun of Righteousness is not, it is in vain to look for light, or warmth, from all our services. But if my LORD come up to his banquetting house the Church, and cause his redeemed to sit under his shadow with great

delight, then shall the whole Jerusalem of our GOD upon earth, like the Jerusalem of our GOD which is above, be feasted with the same love of JESUS. Then shall that scripture promise be fulfilled; we shall *suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, and milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!*

Reader! let you and I be continually seeking grace from the LORD, that under this divine discourse of JESUS, brought home to our warmest affection by the gracious teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we may each for ourselves be enabled to set our seals *that* GOD *is true.* And surely, my brother, if so be you have tasted that the LORD is gracious, however you behold JESUS as *a stumbling block, and a rock of offence* to those blind rulers in Israel, to you he will be more precious, *more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.* Every one who is made partaker of the grace in JESUS, will confess his graciousness, and know that *never man spake like this man!* Dearest Master! may it be my portion to derive all that is truly blessed and desirable in the present life from thee; for sure I am all that is truly glorious in another can only flow from thee. And be it, my honored LORD, my supreme happiness to live upon what JESUS is to me, and hath done for me, and not upon any supposed attainments of mine in following after thee. Indeed, indeed, thou Almighty SAVIOR, the sole joy of the Church, both above and below, can only be in thyself, as that sweet scripture most blessedly confirms, *In the* LORD *shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory!*

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

A woman taken in Adultery is brought to CHRIST *for Judgment. The* LORD *pardons her. He preacheth a divine Discourse. The Jews oppose him, and are about to stone him; but he passeth by, and escapeth their Hands.*

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives.
2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

I take occasion at the very mention of the Mount of Olives, to remind the Reader, what a memorable place this was. JESUS delighted in it. And doth the Reader ask wherefore? The Scriptures will answer the question. See Luke xxii. 39, &c. John xviii. 1, 2. Here it was, that David, a memorable type of CHRIST, ascended bare-footed in his sorrows. 2 Sam. xv. 23. And here it was, the LORD JESUS had to encounter the power of darkness, and sweat a bloody sweat. The LORD had all these things in view; and knew when, and where, his soul-travail would be. Hence JESUS loved the Garden of *Gethsemane!* and the Mount of *Olives.* These were his sacred haunts. Reader! you and I by faith should like to tread the hallowed ground, made sacred to the Redeemer's sufferings!

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery: and when they they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, no man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

It is worthy remark, that these sworn foes of CHRIST did not bring the Adulterer as well as the Adulteress. Had their designs in coming to JESUS been purely from a regard to the sanctity of GOD's law, they would have been as anxious to punish the man, as the woman; for so the law enjoined. See Levit. xx. 10. But the object they had in view was not so much about the Adulteress, as to entangle the LORD JESUS in a snare. Had CHRIST commanded her to be stoned, they would have reproached him for acting contrary to the meekness of the Messiah; and thereby opposing his own doctrine in receiving Publicans and Harlots. And had he screened her from the law, they would have charged him with setting at nought the law of *Moses.*

Deut. xxii. 22, 23, 24. Dearest LORD! what an everlasting *contradiction of sinners didst thou endure against thyself.* Heb. xii. 3. Matt. xxi. 31, 32.

There is somewhat uncommonly interesting in this relation of our LORD's conduct towards this Adulteress. What a lovely portrait is it of the SON of GOD in our nature? Look at JESUS in this sweet point of view, pardoning the sinner, while reproving the sin. There was for a little space some question as to the authenticity of the history; it not being in all the copies of the Testament. And it was confidently said by such, that it was in none of the editions of the *Syriac* version. But *Archbishop Usher*, at no small expence and labor, procured a copy of it in which it was found. It hath exercised also the curiosity of *some*, to know what it was JESUS wrote with his finger on the ground, while the Pharisees were accusing the woman. And it hath been said, that in an ancient Greek manuscript, it was found, that JESUS wrote some of the leading sins of the Scribes and Pharisees then present; which of course, as GOD, he knew. But this is mere conjecture. But as the HOLY GHOST is silent upon the subject, it becomes us to be the same. It is enough for the Church to be in possession of so very sweet a testimony, of the mercifulness of Him, who is the judge of quick and dead. And I venture to believe, that no child of GOD, who hath himself passed under the sentence of GOD's holy law, and, from self-condemnation, hath been led by the HOLY GHOST, to know the grace of JESUS; but must feel delight in so lovely a representation of JESUS, in the exercise of it.

I hope that I shall be forgiven, even if I err, when I venture to behold this woman as a lively emblem and figure of the Church, in the LORD's pardon of her. For surely there never was an Adulteress equally vile in baseness to the Church. Many have departed from their husbands, and dealt shamefully: But what adultery ever came up to the spiritual fornication of the Church? Read the Bible through, and hear the LORD's complaints. See particularly Jerem. ii. Hosea ii. and iii. And then observe how graciously the LORD hath dealt, and doth deal, with his people. Jerem. iii. John v. 14.

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go: but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

16 And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true:

for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

We enter here upon one of the most blessed discourses of JESUS. Who but the LORD JESUS ever called himself, or could call himself, *the light of the world?* Let the Reader gather into one view, some few only of those unequalled expressions of CHRIST, which he applied to himself; and then ask, whether any less than GOD could possibly assume such language? *I am the light of the world. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever.* John vi. 51. *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whomsoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* John xi. 25, 26. Reader! I charge you to pause over these words of CHRIST. What can we suppose, in CHRIST'S assuming this language, if for the moment it could be thought that he was not GOD? And on the conclusion, which is the only conclusion on principles of common sense, that he is; what must be the awful situation of those men, who call themselves Christians, after Him, and yet indirectly charge him with blasphemy in denying his GODHEAD?

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, That ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? and Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true: and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words many believed on him.

If the Reader will take into account the different characters here described, he will be led to discover, (the LORD being his teacher,) wherefore it was, that from the same words and the same preacher, even CHRIST himself; some rejected the counsel of GOD, against their own souls: and some, *while he spake these words, believed on him.* It was so in the days of CHRIST, and under CHRIST; and it hath been the same in every age, and must remain so, until the consummation of all things. And the reason is given in the Scriptures. They who are born in the Adam-state of nature by the fall, and void of all grace-union in CHRIST; have no apprehension of the divine life. Our LORD describes them: *Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world.* And of such the LORD speaks: *If ye believe not that I am; ye shall die in your sins:* And as the LORD had said in the former Chapter; *whither I am ye cannot come.* John vii. 34. And on the other hand, they who were *given to* CHRIST *before the world began;* who are of *the first born whose names are written in heaven;* and by virtue thereof, have had a grace-union in CHRIST; and CHRIST hath betrothed them to himself for ever, in a covenant which cannot be broken: these are secured for recovery from the Adam-nature of a fallen state; in which they were also born, but from their oneness in CHRIST, are in the fulness of time called out of it and regenerated, and *made willing in the day of* GOD's *power.* See Ephes. i. 4. Luke x. 20. Hosea ii. 18, 19. Psm. cx. 3.

By making the true scriptural distinction between these very opposite characters; a light is thrown over this whole discourse, and others of the same nature, of our LORD's. Hence the everlasting opposition made, by the Scribes and Pharisees, to all the divine

preaching of JESUS. And hence the light of grace which broke out in the minds of the LORD's people, under the very same discourses of JESUS, by which, while he spake these words, it is said, that *many believed on him.*

I beg the Reader to notice the particularity of the expression. *If ye believe not,* said JESUS, *that I am;* (the *he* subjoined is not in the original, neither ought it to be considered elliptical,) by which there is an evident allusion to Exodus iii. 14: and there can be no question, but that our LORD meant it in the same sense. *I am, that I am.* So he spake to *Moses,* at the bush. So again he spake here. And so once more, in the close of this same Chapter, verse 58. And I venture to believe, that our LORD meant the words not only in the eternity of his nature, as GOD; but also in his Mediator-character and office, as GOD-Man. And the change of words in this last verse, from *was* to am, *Before Abraham was I am;* most plainly and decidedly proves this most blessed and glorious truth. Reader! ponder it well. Carry it about with you wherever you are; with the credentials of your holy faith. All the blessedness, the marrow, and sweetness, of the Person, Headship, and Office-character of the LORD JESUS, are included in it.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed:

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your Father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham

is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your Father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication: we have one Father *even* God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

In this part of our LORD's discourse, we have a subject equally interesting with the former; but JESUS takes another form, by way of discriminating his people from the world. He adopts a beautiful figure, of an house, and family; in order to shew the striking difference. He represents the image of that fallen state of Adam, by reason of sin, as a servant; and shews, that every one who committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And the similitude is just. Every son and daughter of *Adam*, by transgression hath forfeited all right of inheritance; and is in bondage to sin and Satan. The LORD calls his people, *the lawful captives of the mighty; and the prey of the terrible.* Isaiah xlix. 25. And the LORD represents the children of his kingdom as his, by virtue of his adoption; and shews, that by his abiding in his own house, as a SON for ever, he preserves them, and makes them free. Whereas the servant, having no inheritance, is shortly turned to the door.

This forms a beautiful illustration of the subject. As the whole Adam-race, were all alike involved in the ruin of the fall; they all come forth from the womb of nature in the same natural bondage of sin; all alike serving divers lusts, and pleasures; all under the guilt of sin, the curse of sin, the dominion of sin, the punishment due to sin; the wrath of GOD, and the terrors of his justice. It is only such as the SON of GOD makes free, that *are free indeed!* The carnal Jews could not brook this pointed discourse of CHRIST. Priding themselves on being lineally descended from *Abraham*, they thought that they were entitled to all *Abraham's* privileges. But JESUS taught, that freedom was only in himself. It was not *Abraham's* seed in nature, which gave a right and title to *Abraham's* inheritance; but Abraham's seed in grace. *He saith not and to seeds as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed which is* CHRIST. Gal. iii. 16. Hence all the natural children of *Abraham* only, (and he had many,) were servants in the family, and no other; and had no part, nor lot, in the promises. But the charter of grace ran in these words: *In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* Rom. ix. 7.

I beseech the Reader to pause over our LORD's own illustration of

this subject, as here set forth. Nothing can be more plain, nothing more evident, in proof of that everlasting and irreconcileable separation, between the Church and the world; between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. Both the one, and the other; the Israel after the flesh and the Israel after the Spirit, possess for a time, as servants and children in the same family, apparently the same privileges. In respect of ordinances, and means of grace, they sit down under the same. And like those Pharisees, who never believed in CHRIST, and those true disciples of JESUS who did; the same discourses were delivered before all. But by and by, when the LORD comes to take account, the *Ishmaels*, and the *Isaacs*, are found to be of very different stock; and an everlasting separation takes place. For what saith the scripture; *Cast out the bond woman and her son; for the son of the bond woman shall not be here with the son of the free woman.* Reader! learn to estimate the vast distinction. See whether you can enter into a relish of the Apostle's conclusion, when he saith: *So then brethren, we are not children of the bond woman, but of the free.* Gal. iv. 22. to the end.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech; *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you; If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say that he is your God:

55 Yet ye have not known him: but I know him. And if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw *it*, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old: and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

We have the continuation of our LORD's Sermon, on much the same subject; only, that JESUS is rising higher, and making use of much stronger language in the doctrine, when separating the precious from the vile; the wheat from the chaff; the Church from the world. He here considers the Pharisees as totally incapable of receiving his word, because of their total inability of understanding it. And the LORD traces up the effect, to the cause; in decidedly declaring, and without the smallest reserve or limitation whatever, that *they were of their father the devil, and the works of their father they would do.* Here opens at once the whole matter, and becomes a decision to all the subjects of dispute, which, from age to age, have divided the opinions of men in the world. Wherefore some are everlastingly obdurate, whilst others relent. Some believe in CHRIST, to the salvation of their souls; whilst others are entrenched in invulnerable unbelief. JESUS, by assigning the cause of infidelity, in Satan, plainly shews the cause of faith, in the gift of GOD. I beg the Reader not to turn away from this solemn but just view of the subject, before that he hath first carefully looked over those scriptures, which very

fully explain it: Matt. xxiii. 15. 33. 1 John iii. 8—12. Matt. xiii. 38, 39. Acts xiii. 10. There can be no concord between CHRIST and Belial; between the Church and the world: they differ, in beginning and end; in cause, and effect. They never can coalesce. Tares and wheat may grow together; but tares and wheat they must everlastingly remain, as long as they remain. Hence CHRIST's final sentence to the characters of the Serpentine brood; *ye shall die in your sins: and whither I go ye cannot come.*

I will only detain the Reader with just observing, what a very blessed, and decisive declaration, the LORD JESUS made of himself, when, in the close of his sermon, he said, *Before Abraham was I am!* In every sense how truly blessed! Considered as to his eternal nature, and essence. Considered as to his Mediator-character, as set up the Head and Husband of his Church, from everlasting. Considered as to his Office-work before he openly tabernacled in substance of our flesh, when in his goings forth at creation, and in the garden, with our first Parents; with *Noah*, and before and after the flood! And though it was subsequent to the days of *Abraham*, when the LORD went before his people, in the wilderness; yet *Stephen*, under the immediate influence of the HOLY GHOST declared, that he it was who spake to *Moses*, in Mount *Sinai*. Acts vii. 35. And that the Jews understood our LORD in this sense is very plain, for they took up stones to cast at him for what they considered blasphemy. Hence, that the LORD JESUS asserted his GODHEAD in this blessed expression; *Before Abraham was I am*: and that the Jews took it in this sense is as plain as words can make it. Neither do I think the *action of* CHRIST which followed, less convincing than his *words* in proof of Deity. For as he had done once before upon a like occasion, (See Luke iv. 28 to 30.) to escape their malice for that season; so now he did the same, either by rendering himself for a time invisible, or blinding their apprehension of him: but in either case, manifesting his GODHEAD so as to pass them by.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! may my soul gaze with rapture on every feature of thy divine Person, while by faith I behold thee, as in this Chapter, pardoning the poor Adulteress; and manifesting the mercy of thine heart. Oh! thou dear LORD! well is it for thine Adulteress Church, that thou art a GOD, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; or what would have become of all thy redeemed.

And LORD! I find new occasion to admire, to love, to adore, my compassionate GOD, in that he brings his people from the Adam-nature and servitude of sin, into the freedom and adoption of children, in my LORD's family. Truly LORD *thou hast loosed my bands!* Thou hast brought all thy redeemed from the dominion and guilt of sin, into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. And as it is GOD the SON hath made his people free, they shall be free indeed. And although all thy children, thy blood-bought family, do still carry about with them a body of sin and death, which harrass and afflict the soul: though still the subjects of outward troubles, and inward fears: though many a fiery dart Satan still hurls at them; and many

a wearisome path by his craft and cruelty, he causes them to tread in their pilgrimage: yet thou LORD hast brought them out of his servitude, where once they lived as his drudges; doing his work, and wearing his livery, and delighted with both: and art bringing them home, and wilt bring them all in, to thine heavenly kingdom! Blessed be my GOD and SAVIOR, for all his love and mercy.

Reader! let us both join in thanksgivings to the great I AM; both for his own eternal power and GODHEAD, and for thus drawing the line of everlasting distinction as this Chapter hath it, between those awful characters who by denying CHRIST die in their sins; and those who believe in him to the salvation of their souls. Blessed, for ever blessed, be our great I AM!

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *giveth Sight to a Man which was born blind. The Pharisees are enraged at it.* JESUS *preacheth a sweet Sermon on the Occasion.*

AND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

Such seems to have been the importance of this miracle of CHRIST, as it related to his own glory, and as it related to his Church, that the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to cause the relation of it to occupy an whole Chapter, of more than forty verses. And excepting that memorable one, in respect to the resurrection of *Lazarus*, John xi. and which, for very obvious reasons, may be considered as demanding also the special attention of the Church, we do not find any of the LORD's miracles on the bodies of men, so largely dwelt upon. Under the apprehension therefore of its greater importance to our regard, than some of the more ordinary miracles of CHRIST, I hope the Reader will indulge me with calling his more immediate attention to it: and may both Writer and Reader seek of that *wisdom which is from above*, in the perusal of it, that we may enter into the design of GOD the SPIRIT, in the large relation he hath given; and the glories of GOD the SON in so distinguishing an act of grace as is here shewn; and to the praise of GOD the FATHER, whose name is glorified in his dear SON. John xvii. 1.

And here, according to my view of the subject, and among the other designs of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in the special, and large relation of this miracle; I humbly conceive, that beside the thing itself in so divine an act of CHRIST, in displaying the GODHEAD of his nature, and identifying his Person and Character, as GOD-MAN-MEDIATOR; it was intended as a beautiful illustration of the recovery of every individual member of CHRIST's mystical body, from the blind estate in which they are all born in the Adam-nature of the fall: and out of which the LORD JESUS alone brings them, as the life and light of his people. If the thought be well founded, and is of GOD's teaching; and if both Writer and Reader be enabled to consider it through the whole in this point of view, and the LORD should be pleased to bless their attention to it with his grace, both will then find cause to

say, as one of old did concerning JESUS and his works: *My meditation of Him shall be sweet.* Psm. civ. 34.

Let us enter on the Chapter. It is said, that *as* JESUS *passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.* And who so blind as even GOD's dear children are to spiritual things, when first born in the Adam-nature of original sin, and transgression, sinners from the womb? Scripture saith, that *they are children of wrath even as others, and consequently, until called by grace, have their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of* GOD *through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.* Ephes. iv. 18. They are, in the fullest and strictest sense of the word, blind to the knowledge of GOD the FATHER, and his everlasting love to the Church in CHRIST! Blind to the Person, work, grace, mercy, favor, and all the ten thousand beauties, and excellencies which are in GOD the SON, in his Mediator-character, as Head, and Husband of his Church, and people! Blind to every thing relating to the eternal Power and GODHEAD of the blessed SPIRIT, both in his own essence and glory; and in his grace and mercy to the Church: so that in point of knowledge, as to their own apprehension in spiritual understanding, they have never *so much as heard whether there be any* HOLY GHOST! Acts xix. 2. And of their own utterly lost, ruined, and undone estate, in the Adam-fall of nature, they are perfectly unconscious! Reader! Pause, and ask, whether there can be a blindness like this! And yet whether you are now conscious of it or not: this is the real state of every son and daughter of Adam by nature. None so near to us as GOD: and none so little known, or so little regarded!

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

By this question of the disciples, we cannot suppose that they meant in relation to original sin; as if they doubted the universal corruption of mankind in *Adam.* This could not be the sense of the disciples' words. They knew what the LORD had said by *Moses;* that *the iniquity of the Father is visited upon the children.* Exod. xx. 5. But the Reader should be told, that many years before the coming of CHRIST, a system of Philosophy had been introduced, by one called *Pythagoras,* who taught, that all mankind had existed in some other body before their appearance in the present form of human nature: and that the sins which had been committed by any of them during that former state, was punished in this. The disciples availed themselves perhaps of this opportunity, to know CHRIST's sentiments upon it, and put the question, whether the present blindness of this man was according to this system, the result of his father's sins, or his own. I should not have noted the folly and wickedness of such a doctrine, but with a view to call upon the Reader to remark with me, the awful blindness and ignorance of the world before the coming of CHRIST; when among the wisest of men, such childish and ridiculous notions prevailed. My brother! calculate, if you be able, the auspicious and blessed consequences which the SON of GOD brought with him, when he graciously visited our world!

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

When our LORD gave this answer to his disciples, that neither this man nor his parents had sinned in that he was born blind; JESUS could not be supposed to mean, that they were not sinners; for Scripture declares that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of* GOD. Rom. iii. 23. But the plain and obvious meaning of CHRIST, is, that this man's blindness was not the immediate effect of any one particular sin, in a way of judgment, but rather to afford occasion for the greater display of the works and glory of GOD. And in this very instance, our LORD's doctrine in this particular is proved. For what greater glory could possibly be shewn, than by the blindness of this man, the LORD JESUS might manifest his divine nature and mercy, in giving him sight? How sweetly did it teach also the blindness of soul; and CHRIST's glory in such instances, in giving sight to the spiritually dark, and eyes to the blind in sin. And who shall say, how often the record of this man's history hath proved instrumental in raising trophies of glory to the LORD, through the many intermediate ages from that hour to the present, where sinners, made spiritually alive by grace, have read of the LORD's goodness to him, and felt the LORD's goodness to themselves, in having been brought *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto* GOD. Acts xxvi. 18. Reader! think, I pray you, in how many cases in life such events are perpetually occurring? What numberless opportunities are afforded for the manifestations of the LORD's grace, which grow, out of all the exercises of the LORD's people? And if you know any thing of the LORD, I would desire you to say, how would the LORD JESUS prove his love to you, in seasons of sorrow, in hours of temptation, and in all times of trouble; if you had never known sorrow, never felt temptation, or knew what trouble meant?

4 I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

I beg the Reader to pause over these verses, and mark *some* of the great things contained in them. *First,* observe, how sweetly JESUS speaks in his Mediator-character and office, of doing the works of Him that sent him. Mark the LORD's duty to his FATHER, and his love to his people, in this zeal of his heart. *Secondly,* mark no less, the FATHER's love to the Church, in thus giving, and sending, his dear SON, that the whole body might live, in, by, and through Him. And here before you go further, look at that sweet Scripture in further proof, 1 John iv. 10. *Thirdly,* connect what the LORD JESUS here saith, with what he elsewhere added, upon the subject of doing his FATHER's work. *I have* (said JESUS) *glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* John xvii. 4.

Reader! pause over these very very blessed words. There can be none more blessed upon earth; no, nor in heaven. Redemption-work is finished. The Church of CHRIST is saved. JEHOVAH is glorified. And none but CHRIST could ever assume such language. No angel of light; no, nor all the creation of GOD, can use such words. For though they all set forth GOD's glory, in being the works of his hands; yet no act of theirs, truly and strictly speaking, can add an atom to render GOD more glorious. Sooner might we increase the sun's brightness by the light of the candle, or swell the ocean by our tears; than we can bring in a greater revenue of glory to the LORD by any thing of ours. But the GOD-Man CHRIST JESUS hath added to that glory of JEHOVAH which alone is capable of being exalted, in the manifestation of all that is communicable, to his intellectual creation. Precious LORD JESUS! truly didst thou say in those blessed words: *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* And far better would it be that the sun of this lower world should be extinguished from the heavens, than that CHRIST the Sun of righteousness, should cease to be the light and life of his Church!

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

We now come to the part of this interesting miracle, in which JESUS entered upon the work, of giving sight to the man born blind. The clay, and the spittle, and the pool of *Siloam*, (which the Evangelist takes care to note, is by interpretation *Sent*,) were the means only, the LORD was pleased to make use of, in this marvellous work. But we must look higher than to means of any kind, to discover the first and great cause of the deed. If we consider the case of blindness in general, and especially in the instance before us, where the man was born blind, and where the loss of sight could not have been induced from any injury to the organs of vision; it is but a fair conclusion, as in a multitude of blind persons, it is not merely loss of sight, but a total loss of eyes. Hence, if it be only allowed, that a single one of the many blind to whom the LORD JESUS gave sight in the days of his flesh, had eyeless sockets; here was a compleat act of creation, and as manifest a display of divine power, as at the creation of the world. So that CHRIST hereby gave a full demonstration of his GODHEAD. The Reader will observe, that I do not presume to say that this was literally the case, in the instance of this man, or any other among the blind which JESUS healed. But no one can say that it was not so. And I venture to think, from what the man himself said, that the probability in favor of this opinion is greater than it is against it. *Since the world began*, (said he,) *was it not heard that any*

man opened the eyes of one that was born blind, ver. 32. I leave the Reader to form his conclusions. Bnt I cannot help observing, that it would be well for every man who hath the least pause in his mind, whether CHRIST be GOD, or not; and infinitely more so, for every man who presumes to deny CHRIST'S GODHEAD, to ascertain this point. For if this blind man, or any other to whom CHRIST gave sight, had eyeless sockets; (as is, I believe, in blindness more generally the case than otherwise;) here was, to all intents and purposes, a creation of the organs of vision. And I again repeat, this deed as fully, and as clearly defined the GODHEAD, as all the other parts of creation.

I only detain the Reader with a short observation more, before that we pass to the next verses in the history, just to remark, that such were the features of character, by which CHRIST was to be known. Ages before our LORD'S incarnation, the Prophet was commissioned to tell the Church, when pointing to his Person, and Character: *behold!* (said he,) *your* GOD *will come and save you!* And how was he to be known? *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.* Isaiah XXXV. 4, 5.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he. Others *said,* He is like him, *but* he said, I am *he.*

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash. And I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? he said, I know not.

Let the Reader figure to himself, if he can, the wonderful effect which was wrought on the minds of the neighbors, and those who knew him, in beholding one, who from a child, like many we now meet with in life, was blind; having new eyes, and the organs of vision in full exercise! How must they have been astonished? And what a talk must it have made, in the circle of all his acquaintance? But, Reader! how much greater the astonishment to himself, when he saw clearly the objects with which he had long conversed; and daylight, and all the sweet prospects of nature, appearing to his view, every where around him! Pause a moment more. If such to a blind man in nature, were the wonders of sight; what must it be, yea what is it daily to a child of GOD in grace, when his spiritual eyes are opened *to see the wonderful things of* GOD'S *law?*

13 ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight? he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet,

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a

sinner, *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for* this *fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 ¶ They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? and they cast him out.

If there be a part of this interesting narrative that we may pass over, as less demanding attention, one, than another, it is this. To behold the wretched delusion of those awful characters, the *Pharisees*! Their natural enmity to CHRIST. Their implacable malice to his doctrine. Their determined resolution to oppose, and deafen if possible, the voice of this Charmer, *charm he never so wisely!* Psm. lviii. 5. But, Reader! let you, and I, learn from hence the unspeakable mercy of distinguishing grace! *Who is it that maketh us to differ from another? And what have we*, or what are we, *that we did not receive?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Their bitterness in excommunicating the blind man, shews to what a desperate state they were arrived. Whether this was the milder act of excommunication, called *Niddui*, which extended but to thirty days separation; or whether the more severe, called *Cherem*, which was a total separation for ever from the congregation of Israel, is not said. But, Reader! how sweetly may we apply the words of the LORD,

which he used upon another occasion, to this and all the other cruelties of men. *And I say unto you my friends,* (said JESUS,) *be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him.* Luke xii. 4, 5.

But, Reader, it is high time to look at this miracle in another, and a far more endearing point of view, than the mercy shewn to the body; and see, what rich and blessed lessons there are taught in it, in relation to the soul. I remarked, at the opening of the Chapter, that according to my apprehension, while I behold GOD the HOLY GHOST appointing a whole Chapter to this record of a single miracle of CHRIST, I am inclined to think, that it was intended, among other things, to minister to this great end; that by so beautiful an illustration, might be shewn, the LORD JESUS spiritually giving sight to the blind in soul, and opening the mind born in trespasses and sins, to the knowledge of himself, in grace here, and to glory hereafter.

And I cannot begin my observations on this ground, without remarking, that if it was the gracious design of GOD the SPIRIT, from this miracle of JESUS, to instruct the Church in this precious truth, nothing can be more exactly suited from every circumstance of it. Though the Church of JESUS hath from everlasting a grace-union with her glorious Head; hath a being in him, and a well-being, which nothing in her time-state can finally destroy: yet born as in every individual instance the whole Church is, in the Adam-nature of a fallen, sinful, and corrupt state; all are blind to all knowledge of GOD, or themselves. So that like this poor man in nature, such is the Church as to grace, all blind from birth.

And as it was JESUS passing by and seeing him, which first led to the mercy he obtained, so is it in grace; there are no advances made by the blind sinner to the LORD, until the LORD hath *passed by and bid him live.* Ezek. xvi. 1—14. *John* was taught by the HOLY GHOST, thus to teach the Church: *If we love him, it is because he first loved us.* 1 John iv. 19.

Moreover, the case is the same, with respect to the divine glory, in both instances. This man's blindness of body, gave occasion for the works of GOD to be made manifest in him; so the blindness of soul, affords opportunity for GOD in CHRIST, to be magnified in the works of grace. The clay and the pool of *Siloam,* were merely instrumental, in the hand of CHRIST: so ordinances and means of grace are but mere channels of communication, from him to his people. And without him, as the clay would rather have contributed to obstruct sight than to give it; so ordinances unaccompanied with his blessing, tend more to increase spiritual blindness than remove it. *We are* (saith Paul,) *unto* GOD *a sweet savor of* CHRIST *in them that are saved, and in them that perish.* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. Rev. iii. 18.

The conduct of the neighbors upon this occasion, in the surprize they expressed, at beholding one, so long known to them as blind, now suddenly blessed with sight; is not unsimilar to that wonder and astonishment the carnal world not unfrequently shew, when at any time some ungodly sinner hath his eyes spiritually opened, to the light of the divine life. The work itself is so great and altogether so divine, that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath caused it to be celebrated

in one of his songs of praise. *When the* LORD *turned again the captivity of Zion; then were we like to them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, the* LORD *hath done great things for them. The* LORD *hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad.* Psm. cxxvi.

One word more in relation to the poor man who stands forth in this scripture, and in the LORD's Church so precious a monument of sovereign mercy. He was not conscious at the first, who his great benefactor was. Neither could he tell, how the LORD had accomplished the wonderful cure. He only knew, that he was once blind, and now had sight. Such is not unfrequently the case in respect to spiritual mercies. How little do we know of JESUS, when first he manifests himself to us *otherwise than he doth to the world.* And even after renewed love tokens of his favor, how backward we are, in apprehension. All the objects we at first behold in spiritual discernment, are but indistinct, like the sight to him, who *saw men as trees walking.* Mark viii. 22—26. But, Reader! it is blessed to be able to give the same sweet testimony as this man. Though you, or I, or any other child of GOD cannot exactly tell how or when or where, as to time place and method, the LORD was pleased to adopt to our effectual calling; still *the day of small things is not to be despised,* when we can truly say as he did: *One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.*

35 ¶ Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world: that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

What a most beautiful and interesting view do those few verses give the Church, of the Person, grace, and benignity of her LORD?

and what a wonderful work doth that grace and benignity of JESUS accomplish in a short time both upon the bodies and souls of men in every instance to his redeemed, when called forth in exercise. Here is a man born blind in nature, and equally blind in grace. And by the sovereign act of JESUS, without one act of his own, immediately recovered to the blessed sight, both in body and soul. For evidently by his worshipping CHRIST, he gave ample testimony that this miracle also the LORD had wrought upon him! And I pray the Reader not to overlook the very distinguishing manner, and extent of the mercy, manifested by JESUS to his poor patient. The SON of GOD, as GOD, had not at this time made so full and open a revelation of his Name, in the general exercise of his ministry. Excepting to the woman of *Samaria*, John iv. 26; and his disciples in the Mount of Transfiguration, and where he charged secrecy: the LORD had not been as communicative, as to the man born blind. See Matt. xvii. 5—9. But the Pharisees had cast him out. JESUS therefore in taking him in, will make a glorious discovery who he is, and in whom he hath to trust.

Neither doth the close of the Chapter minister less comfort to the Church, in the awful account the LORD JESUS hath given, of the double purpose of his mission. To root out of his kingdom all things that offend, is as needful a display of his sovereignty, as the gathering of his people to himself. *The day of vengeance is in his heart, when the year of his redeemed is come.* Isaiah lxiii. 4. Methinks these verses, of CHRIST's judgment on the Pharisees, stand as the cloud did in the camp of Israel, to make dark the Egyptians, while it gave light to Israel. Exod. xiv. 19, 20. Reader! no doubt, the contemplation is tremendously awful. But it is not more awful than sure. CHRIST is the Rock of ages; the sure foundation, which JEHOVAH hath laid in Zion. *He that believeth shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.* But he is in the same moment, a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.* And on whomsoever he shall fall, *it will grind him to powder.* Deut. xxxii. 4. Isaiah xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 8. Matt. xxi. 44.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! contemplate in this man, thy state by nature; blind indeed, from thy birth, and in spiritual things, as ignorant as the very brute that perisheth. And how long didst thou remain, stumbling over the dark mountains of sin, and unbelief? Nay, wouldest thou not have remained so for ever, had not JESUS passed by, and created life and light to thy spiritual apprehension? It was indeed the sabbath day when JESUS did this; for He himself became the very sabbath of thy soul. And in this sovereign act of grace, how sweetly hath he proved to thee his own eternal power and GODHEAD! Surely thou canst say, with this fellow-partaker in the rich mercy: *Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

Oh! ye blind Pharisees! How long will ye have to learn a right knowledge of the Person and righteousness of JESUS? An whole eternity ye will have to mourn over the darkness of blackness for ever!

How awfully verified, in that day which unfolds all, will be the words of JESUS! *When ye have lifted up the* SON *of Man; then shall ye know that I am.* Yes! know it, to your everlasting condemnation; but not to your joy, as the LORD's people!

Reader! Doth JESUS now put the question to you, and to me, which he put to the man born blind, when he had opened his eyes; *Dost thou believe on the* SON *of* GOD? Hath the LORD opened our eyes? Have we seen the king in his beauty? Seen ourselves in our deformity? Can we, from the heart, and from the soul, fall down and worship him? crying out, as one of old: *Rabbi, thou art the* SON *of* GOD! *Thou art the King of Israel!* Oh! the blessedness of being taught by him! Surely the LORD will say to us, as he did to the Apostle, on his confession: *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my* FATHER *which is in heaven.*

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS *opens this Chapter with describing himself under the Character of the Good Shepherd; and his Church as his Sheep. He sweetly discourseth, and causeth a Division of Opinion thereby among the Jews. Many are brought to believe on Him.*

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling: and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

I beg the Reader, at his entrance on this most blessed Chapter, that he will not overlook the double mention of one of CHRIST's precious names, as JESUS opened his discourse. *Verily, Verily;* or *Amen, Amen.* There is somewhat more in the word itself, than is generally supposed. Some have said, let us set *our* Amen to the LORD's words, if we hope CHRIST will set *his* to our salvation. But though it may be, and no doubt it is, highly proper to be able to set *to our seal that* GOD *is true*; and the general acceptation of *Amen* is not amiss, when *from the heart man believeth unto salvation:* yet it is equally proper, the truly spiritual Reader should have a yet higher apprehension of the *Verily,* or *Amen* of CHRIST. If he will consult what the LORD JESUS hath himself said on this point, when sending his solemn message, unto the angel of the Church of the *Laodiceans,* (Rev. iii. 14.) he will there discover, that the LORD introduced the whole of his awful threatenings with the authority of this great Name. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness.* And his servant the Prophet, commissioned by his authority, taught the,

Church, that whenever a child of GOD *blessed himself in the earth*, that is stood in need of blessings, and asked for them, they should be sought for *in the* GOD *of truth*; or, as the words may be rendered, shall bless himself in GOD, Amen, meaning CHRIST. Isaiah lxv. 16. John xiv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 20. Ephes i. 3. So that in the two Verilys, or *Amen* twice uttered, by CHRIST himself, at his entrance on this Chapter, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you!* it is as if this glorious Amen, this faithful and true witness, confirmed the whole of his discourse, both with his word, and with his oath. The Apostle, speaking of GOD the FATHER, in his Personal office in the Covenant, saith, *that because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.* Heb. vi. 13. In like manner, GOD the SON, in his Personal office GOD-Man-Mediator, doth the same in his doubled *Verily*. In the first *Amen*, JESUS takes his glorious name; *the Amen, the faithful witness.* And in the second *Amen*, it becomes as his word and oath, confirming, and making sure all he saith. I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this, in all the *Verilys* of CHRIST, which he meets with in the whole of his divine discourses. The LORD JESUS hath been pleased to use the word nearly *fifty times*, as we read in what the three former Evangelists have recorded of his ministry. And a double *Verily*, as in this Chapter, in more than *twenty* instances as recorded by *John*. Well therefore may it merit our close attention.

But let us now enter upon the LORD's discourse in this Chapter. The general scope of which is, under the similitude of a sheepfold, to describe his Church, which his FATHER had given to him, as his flock; and himself as the Shepherd, under all the endearing characters of such an office. The Reader should recollect, that the chief treasure of the East, at the time of our LORD's appearing, and for ages before, consisted chiefly in flocks, and herds, and vines, and fig-trees, and corn, and the like; and all the riches of agriculture. And as our LORD availed himself upon every occasion, to raise subjects for discourse from the objects around, and from such things as his hearers were most familiarly acquainted with: that of a sheepfold seems to have been the one chiefly used by him, and his servants. Indeed not only JESUS takes to himself this character, but GOD the FATHER called him by that name: Zech. xiii. 7. And the Church herself, catching the words from the LORD, invites the LORD JESUS to hear her as the Great Shepherd of Israel, from between the Cherubim. Psm. lxxx. 1. And if the Reader wishes to have a most complcat view of the LORD JESUS under this blessed office, he will find a whole Chapter, directed by the HOLY GHOST in the ministry of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, to this one subject, Ezek. xxxiv.

It should seem, by the manner in which CHRIST hath introduced his discourse, of a robbery, in an entrance into the sheepfold, in an improper way, that the LORD had in view the Scribes, which sat in Moses's seat, and assumed the office of teaching the people, unauthorized of GOD. Matt. xxiii. 2. Mark xii. 38. And it is of such the LORD again speaks in the 8th verse; of *all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers:* meaning all false shepherds and hirelings, *who feed themselves but not the flock!* Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 4. But Reader, do not fail to observe, what JESUS saith concerning them. *But the sheep did not hear them:* that is, were not led away by their false leadings, into unwholsome pasture. Sweet thought to the true

sheep of CHRIST! There hath indeed, in all ages of the Church, been such false Pastors. And tremendously awful must be their final doom. But JESUS the true Shepherd, hath watched over the whole of his flock, and not suffered one of them to be lost; neither shall one of them be found wanting, in the day he maketh them up. The Prophet was commissioned to tell the Church, that *the flocks must all pass again under the hands of Him that telleth them.* Jerem. xxxiii. 13.

I must not indulge myself as I could wish, in entering into the several most interesting particulars, which the LORD JESUS hath here set before us under this beautiful similitude, of a Shepherd and his flock; as descriptive of himself and his Church. I must content myself with only calling upon the Reader to a few of the more prominent features of character by which JESUS hath set it forth. The FATHER is blessedly shewn by CHRIST in his Covenant-character, as the giver of this fold. JESUS delights upon every occasion to keep this in view to the Church. *Thine they were,* (saith CHRIST,) *and thou gavest them me.* John xvii. 6. And in this Chapter, when speaking of the everlasting safety of his flock; he ascribes both the gift of his sheep, and their security in him to the Father. *My* FATHER *which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my* FATHER'S *hand. I and my* FATHER *are One.* CHRIST declares himself to be the Great Shepherd of his sheep, both by speaking of himself, under this character, as entering in by the door; and twice in the course of his description of the office, calling himself the *good* Shepherd. Verses 11 and 14. See also Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Isaiah xl. 11. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. v. 4. And GOD the HOLY GHOST is in my view very blessedly represented by the LORD JESUS, as opening the door of the sheep-fold to CHRIST, which he doth most effectually, when that gracious LORD opens the hearts of his people to receive JESUS, as it is here said, *he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.* And let it not be thought unsuitable or unbecoming to make application of the office of a *Porter* to GOD the SPIRIT, when using similitudes. Hosea xii. 10. For if CHRIST calls himself, as he doth in this Chapter, *the door,* (verse 9,) there can be nothing improper in considering GOD the HOLY GHOST, in that precious office of his, in opening to CHRIST as the *Porter.* Reader! pause over the review of the subject, as far as we have already gone. Behold! each of the glorious Persons of the GODHEAD, in their Covenant-offices, as here blessedly set forth, in reference to the Sheep-fold of CHRIST. Here is GOD the FATHER, giving the whole to CHRIST. Here is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, calling his Sheep his own by virtue of taking them for his own, and as the gift of the FATHER, before all worlds. Ephes. i. 4. And here is GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his sweet office-work, in the same everlasting Covenant, opening to CHRIST for his entrance into his fold; causing the sheep to hear his voice, and to follow JESUS, that they may go in, and out, and find pasture.

Let us now observe some of the more prominent features of character, in relation to the fold. JESUS not only owns them, and calls them all by name; but hath given several strong and leading marks, by which his sheep are known and distinguished from all the goats of the world, and from every false resemblance which might appear, of goats in sheeps' cloathing.

And *first*, they are said to be the Sheep of CHRIST, given to him before the foundation of the world, when as JESUS under one of his well known office-characters of wisdom, saith, *the* LORD *possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old, when I was set up from everlasting.* And in the same moment that the SON of GOD in his Wisdom-character was set up, the Head and Husband of his Church, and the Great Shepherd of his Sheep; then must have been set up with him, and from him, and for him, his Church, his Spouse, his Sheep. For in none of those relations could he have stood; neither have had ability to have acted in the office, without the relative characters to have exercised such relations and offices towards. And hence in the same scripture, where the SON of GOD speaks of being thus set up from the beginning, he no less saith, *that he was rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* And this at a time, (or rather before time,) when as yet JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Persons *had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.* PROV. viii. 22—31. And I beg the Reader, before he proceeds further, to consult some at least, of those many blessed scriptures, which both confirm this precious truth, of the grace-union between CHRIST and his Church, before all worlds; and also of the going forth of all the Persons of the GODHEAD in the after acts of creation. Ephes. i. 4. Coloss. i. 15—18. Ephes. iii. 9, 10, 11. Gen. i. 26.

Secondly. When those great leading truths are fully impressed upon the Reader's mind, I beg him to go on to notice, in relation to this Sheep-fold of JESUS, that it is a gathered fold, out of Nature's wild wilderness, chosen, fenced in, made separate, and distinct; from the everlasting love of GOD the FATHER, the apprehending union of GOD the SON, and the blessed grace, and anointing influence of GOD the HOLY GHOST. For it is a point of infinite consequence to be observed, when giving to the HOLY THREE in ONE, the honor due to JEHOVAH's name; that as GOD the FATHER chose the Church in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, and GOD the SON betrothed the Church to himself from everlasting: Hosea ii. 19. So GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his gracious Covenant-office, respecting CHRIST and his Church, did equally manifest his everlasting love in the divine appointment, by anointing the head and members as one, revealing and making known to the Church the Messiah as GOD's anointed, many ages before CHRIST was born. And as CHRIST was thus anointed in this office and relation character to his Church; consequently GOD the HOLY GHOST had an eye to the Church in this gracious act, and foreviewed the Church, and loved the Church in CHRIST, with an everlasting love, as the Church of CHRIST, and with proportioned love of the body, as he loved the glorious Head. The oneness and union in the divine nature of the whole GODHEAD prove this. John xvii. 23.

Thirdly. It forms a most sweet, and precious part, in the contemplation of this subject of CHRIST and his Church, the Shepherd and his Sheep; that while distinguished as the fold is, by the electing love of GOD the FATHER, the redeeming love of GOD the SON, and the regenerating love of GOD the HOLY GHOST; the whole Sheep-fold is but one, however divided into distinct branches, whether *Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free.* So the LORD speaks in this

very Chapter; when he saith *there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.* And so he blessedly speaks elsewhere, when comforting his Church. *My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother: she is the choice one of her that bare her.* Song vi. 9. Reader! do not lose sight of this. CHRIST's Sheepfold can be but one. CHRIST, the Husband of his Church, hath but one Bride. None can be added to his Church. None taken from it. The world's goats can never pass under his hands for sheep. No! neither goats in sheep-cloathing escape his eye. Here, in this world's wilderness, they may, and too often do, break over the fence, and mingle in the pastures of CHRIST's sheep. Indeed too often worry the LORD's sheep, and make them, as the LORD calls his oppressed ones, *the flock of slaughter.* Zech. xi. 4—7. Rom. viii. 36. But ere long, these things will for ever cease. JESUS the Great Shepherd will come and cause an everlasting separation. Matt. xxv. 31 to the end. Pause over this lovely subject. CHRIST and his fold as one. JESUS calls them by every endearing name, in a way of distinction and delight. They are a *little* flock: but yet a numerous body, *a multitude which no man can number.* Compare Luke xii. 32. with Rev. vii. 9. They are black in their own esteem, but comely in the eyes of JESUS. Song i. 5. Ezek. xvi. 14. And elsewhere, the LORD calls them a *beautiful* flock. Jerem. xiii. 20. And what can the imagination form to itself more beautiful than the Church, made up of a vast multitude, as first presented to her Husband, in his eternal mind before all worlds; then recovered out of her fallen and polluted time state, in her *Adam*-nature, in being washed from her sins in CHRIST's blood, and clothed in his righteousness; and finally presented by JESUS *to himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before him for ever.* Ephes. i. 4. Psm. xlv. 9—17. Ephes. v. 25 to the end.

I must not swell our observations on those verses any further. But otherwise, what a subject opens to our view in the contemplation of JESUS in the extensive office of a Shepherd? It is indeed endless. The personal knowledge CHRIST hath of every individual of his fold. How can it be otherwise, than that he must know them, when he hath received every one of them at his FATHER's hands; their names written in the book of life; they are every one of them married to his person, united to himself, yea, part of himself: He calleth them all by name. He hath died for them, shed his blood for them, become the Surety for them, cleansed them in his blood from all their sins, hath ascended for them to glory, is gone before them to take possession of his Mediator-kingdom in their name, is everlastingly appearing in the presence of his FATHER for them, and he hath promised to come again, and take them home to himself, that where he is, there they shall be also! Reader! under such precious views and assurances, can it be possible that JESUS can overlook, forget, and be regardless of each, and every individual of his fold, when his own glory is concerned in the event of their present and everlasting welfare? Yea, the very charge of his office, as Mediator and Shepherd, will not be fulfilled until he hath brought the whole home, and *not an hoof left behind* in that great day of GOD, when they *must all pass again under the hands of him that telleth them?* Reader, do not fail, in confirmation, to turn to the perusal of some of those sweet scriptures, such as John xvii. 2. Psm. cxxxix. 16. Isaiah iv. 3. Dan. xii. 1. Luke x. 20. 1 Cor. vi.

17. 2 Cor. v. 15. Heb. vi. 20. John xiv. 3. Exod. x. 26. Jerem. xxxiii. 13. Blessed and Almighty Shepherd of thy blood-bought flock! very sure I am of thy pastoral love and care. As the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, thou wilt everlastingly be in thy diocese. Thou wilt feed thy flock like a shepherd. Thou wilt cause them *to lie down in wholesome pastures.* And, as thou hast said, *thou wilt search, and seek out thy flock in the day* (this time state of our wilderness dispensations,) *in which thou art among thy sheep, to bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick.* Yea, LORD JESUS, thou wilt seek me, even me, *for I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost!* But JESUS hath said, *I must bring the other sheep which are not of this fold;* thousands, and tens of thousands, which were not in the Jewish fold of the Old Testament, but of the Gentile fold, under both the Old and New Testament dispensation. JESUS *must* bring them. Why must my LORD do so? Because they are part of himself, they are the body of CHRIST, the Church the FATHER gave him, and purchased by his blood, and regenerated by the HOLY GHOST. Hence JESUS must bring them all home, and they shall be *for a crown of glory in the hand of the* LORD, *and a royal diadem in the hand of my* GOD! Isaiah lxii. 3.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Reader! make a long pause over these blessed verses, for they are most blessed. The love JESUS here speaks of cannot possibly mean the love of GOD the FATHER to GOD the SON, as GOD; for then, in this sense, no such reason as is here assigned, would be given. Neither did GOD the SON lay down his life as GOD. And, moreover, the observation of GOD the FATHER loving GOD the SON would have been unnecessary in CHRIST to have informed the disciples. For unless the Church had faculties suitable to the apprehension, (which is impossible,) we never could have the least conception what that infinite love is, which One of the divine Persons in the GODHEAD bears to another. But the love of the FATHER to CHRIST here spoken of by JESUS, is the love he hath to him as GOD-Man-Mediator. He loved him for his voluntary undertaking to become the Head and Husband of his body the Church. He loved him for all the offices connected with it, in rescuing his Spouse, his Bride, which the FATHER gave him before all worlds, from that dreadful state of sin and ruin into which, in the time-state of her Adam-nature, she had fallen. This, I venture to believe, was the love which the LORD JESUS here spake of, and which JESUS prized so highly. And well might all the persons of the GODHEAD delight in the GOD-Man love of JESUS to his Church. For the perfect unsinning obedience of the whole creation of GOD, yea, had the whole creation of GOD, added to that obedience, been offered up

as one rich and full oblation, the whole would have been nothing in comparison to the holy life, and spotless death of CHRIST upon the cross, when doing away the whole penal effect of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and magnifying the law of GOD, and making it honorable. Reader! pause a moment longer, and then say, did GOD the FATHER thus love CHRIST on our account, think then how GOD the FATHER must love us. And if JESUS was so loved by the FATHER for us, how ought CHRIST to be loved by us?

I must not suffer the Reader to pass away from those sweet verses before that he hath also noticed, and with the due attention it merits, what JESUS hath said of his own sovereign power and GODHEAD. If no man had power to take his life from him, but as he elsewhere saith: *As the* FATHER *hath life in himself, so hath he given to the* SON *to have life in himself.* John v. 26. let the Reader receive from those precious words, the LORD's assurance of his nature and office as GOD-MAN-Mediator! Oh! how infinitely great must be his nature, how full of glory and dignity his person, who thus possessed such infinite power? And how unspeakably great his love, who so loved us, as *to give himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to* GOD *for a sweet smelling savor?*

19 ¶ There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

22 ¶ And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

I beg the Reader to ponder what is here said. The observations made by the Jews concerning the person and office of CHRIST, is very striking. More than half convinced by reason and argument they frequently were, that JESUS was the CHRIST, but never brought into a belief of it by divine teaching. And so it is in the present hour.

The carnal and the ungodly are not unfrequently alarmed in their consciences, but their apprehension of GOD's truths is only head knowledge; no heart-influence. Devils have this knowledge. So they said, Luke iv. 41. But devils they remained, and will eternally remain. Reader! oh! see to it, that your knowledge of the LORD JESUS is of the LORD. It is GOD the FATHER makes known the SON. Matt. xi. 27. GOD the HOLY GHOST makes known the SON. I Cor. xii. 3. And the consequence of this divine teaching produceth those blessed effects which CHRIST describes, John vi. 45. And the reverse of this JESUS teacheth in this chapter, and elsewhere. See 26, 27, verses. See also John viii. 42, 43.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

30 I and *my* Father are one.

In addition to what hath been offered in the former part of this chapter, on the subject of CHRIST and his Church, as a shepherd and his sheep; I would only beg the Reader to observe here, how blessedly CHRIST dwells upon those grand features of character. His sheep *hear his voice*, they *know him*, they *follow him*. They hear the voice of JESUS in his word, in his promises, in his providences. They discern the truth, because JESUS himself is *the way, the truth, and the life*. They are enabled, through the SPIRIT, to discern CHRIST's voice from strangers, from hirelings, from false teachers, and false preachers. What doth not tend to humble the sinner, and exalt the SAVIOR, is not of CHRIST. And as JESUS knows them, calleth them all by their names, that is, speaketh in his word, and by his word, to their cases, wants, and circumstances; so they *know him* and *follow him* in the regeneration. And the eventful happy consequence of the whole is, that from their oneness with CHRIST, and interest in CHRIST, their present and everlasting welfare is secured, and both the FATHER and the SON are engaged in the ultimate glory of the whole. So sure, so certain, and so unalterable, are all the purposes of GOD in CHRIST. JEHOVAH saith himself, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*. Isaiah xlvi. 10.

I detain the Reader at the last verse of this paragraph, for his distinct and separate attention. For, although the LORD JESUS adduceth this oneness between the FATHER and himself, by way of confirmation to what he had said before, and which to be sure becomes the most decisive testimony in proof, that ever can be given; for if CHRIST and the FATHER are One, in nature, essence, will, power, and design, nothing of creature strength, or creature policy, can counteract JEHOVAH's purpose; but I detain the Reader at this verse by way of re-

questing his closest attention to it on every other account, connected with a doctrine of so highly important a nature. And I do very earnestly beg that he will regard it with all due observation. *I, and my* FATHER, (saith CHRIST,) *are One.* And this oneness runs through all the various parts by which this union can be manifested. Distinct only in person, they are one in every thing beside. *First,* in relation to the essence and nature of the GODHEAD. In Being, Attributes, Property, Dignity, Glory, and Happiness. In proof, I refer to those blessed scriptures. Deut. vi. 4. 1 John v. 7. Zech. xiii. 7. Philip. ii. 6. Rom. ix. 5. Hence, is GOD the FATHER the mighty GOD? So is the SON, Isaiah ix. 6. Is GOD the FATHER omnipresent? So is the SON, Matt. xxviii. 20. Is GOD the FATHER omniscient? So is the SON, John xxi. 17. Is GOD the FATHER unchangeable? So is the SON. Heb. xiii. 8. And the whole tenor of the divine word, is, that *all men should honor the* SON, *even as they honor the* FATHER. John v. 23. *Secondly,* This oneness in design, plan, and execution of the whole purposes relating to the Church, marks all the persons of the GODHEAD. If the sacred Three in One have graciously entered into covenant engagements with each other, this is, to bring about and accomplish one and the same design. Though, as distinct persons, they have been pleased to undertake distinct offices, yet the whole are directed to manifest their unity, in the promotion of their sovereign will, all harmonizing to the divine glory, and the Church's happiness in CHRIST. So that when CHRIST saith, as in this blessed scripture; *I, and my* FATHER, *are One,* is included every thing of oneness, the distinction of persons only excepted. And, in proof of this distinction of persons, the words themselves are abundantly satisfactory and conclusive. The word *are* is plural to the two names, *I,* and my FATHER; which could not in common sense have been used without implying this plurality of persons. Reader! pray ponder well these things. They are always blessed to be particularly regarded, but infinitely more so in a CHRIST-despising generation like the present.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand;

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized: and there he abode.

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 And many believed on him there.

I would appeal to the common sense of mankind, whether any unprejudiced person upon earth can be found, who would say, that the Jews did not consider what CHRIST had just said as claiming an equality with GOD? And, I would demand yet further, is it not as plain as words can make it, that upon these principles, and according to their laws, they took up stones to stone him for what they supposed to be blasphemy? And I appeal to the same common sense of mankind, whether any form of words could be used by CHRIST more firm, or decided, in proof of his claims to GODHEAD, than JESUS hath here adopted. And, under these impressions, what but the most hardened blindness, could hesitate to acknowledge him, what JEHOVAH had all along acknowledged him, *the Man that is my fellow, saith the* LORD *of hosts.* Zech. xiii. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! you and I here plainly discover that CHRIST is the good Shepherd. Both his office, relation, and character, under this sweet figure, he is chosen into by GOD the FATHER, and all his sheep given by the FATHER to him as his own. They were his, in this appointment, from everlasting. And now in the time-state of a wilderness, where the LORD finds them wandering, he comes to seek and save that which was lost. Have you and I known CHRIST under this endeared character? Have we the features JESUS hath here described, by which we alone prove, that we are the sheep of his pasture. Nothing can be more plain than what JESUS hath here marked to discover his sheep from the world's goats. He saith, the sheep hear his voice, they know his call, they follow him. A stranger they

will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. Have we these undeniable tokens? Oh! for grace to be so distinguished! Blessed it is to lie down in his fold, to feed in his pastures, and to go in and out by those wholesome waters of comfort, beside which, *the Great Shepherd of Israel feeds his flock!* Reader! JESUS will do by all his fold as the HOLY GHOST hath said. He will feed, protect, heal, strengthen, guide, and, in short, do all that pertains to the office of a shepherd; he will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead those that are with young. And, to crown all, he will most effectually preserve from all evil, and give them eternal life, so that *none shall perish, or any pluck them out of his and his* FATHER'S *hands.* Hail! Almighty Shepherd of thy flock.

Reader! behold the triumphs of thy LORD over all the enemies of his GODHEAD, and against all the awful opposition made to his divine person and character. So was it then, so is it now, and so shall it be, until the LORD hath brought the whole under his footstool. LORD JESUS! establish thy people in their most holy faith, until that thou shalt bring them home unto *the fountains of living water, where, as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, thou art feeding them, and where thou hast wiped all tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of thy people thou hast taken away from off all the earth!*

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *raiseth Lazarus from the Dead. The Priests and Pharisees become more desperately enraged at* JESUS. *They gather a Council to deliberate on his Death.*

NOW a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that,* he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Every incident in this wonderful relation ought to be regarded with peculiar notice, for the Evangelist hath been very particular in recording it. And very sure it is, that GOD the HOLY GHOST meant it for a subject of great blessedness to the Church.

And here let us admire the emphasis with which it is said, LORD, *behold, he whom thou lovest is sick!* Reader! do not fail to remark, that JESUS hath those whom he loveth. And many such there are concerning whom the LORD might be told, and, I hope, is told, by faithful souls on occasion of the sickness and afflictions of themselves and brethren in CHRIST; LORD! such and such an one, whom thou lovest, is sick. And may we not very frequently hear CHRIST's answer by the ear of faith: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* Rev. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 5—11.

The abode of our LORD two days after he had received tidings of

the sickness of *Lazarus,* appears to have been blessedly designed for the greater manifestation of the miracle he intended. And JESUS speaking first of his sleep, then of his death, and of his going to raise him out of this sleep of death, all these are so many heightenings, in preparing the minds of his disciples for the miracle, as should be particularly noticed by us. His knowledge of his death, and his declaration that he would raise him again, are all so many collateral proofs of his GODHEAD. The affection of *Thomas,* in accompanying CHRIST to *Bethany,* and his invitation to his fellow disciples to the same, are sweet tokens of attachment to the person of CHRIST, although in a more memorable hour *they all forsook him and fled.* Mark xiv. 50.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

As *Bethany* was somewhat less than two miles from *Jerusalem,* it is somewhat wonderful that no tidings had reached the city of the death of *Lazarus.* But we see how this was overruled for the greater display of the foreknowledge of JESUS, and for the greater manifestation of his power in the miracle which afterwards followed, in CHRIST's raising him from the dead.

I pass by very many incidents which the Evangelist hath related, all of which are full of sweet instruction, but cannot be brought for remarks upon within the compass of a *Poor Man's Commentary*, in order to attend to such as are more immediately demanding our regard. But the conversation the LORD held with *Martha* is too big with importance to be hastily passed over, and I beg the Reader's indulgence in attending to a short view of it.

The faith which this woman had in CHRIST, seems to have been a general belief only that JESUS was the *Messiah;* and therefore from the miracle he had wrought, she had no question but that he could have prevented the death of her brother. But, in relation to any other views, in which CHRIST would manifest that character, *Martha* at this time had but little consciousness. However, it is our mercy, that her dulness gave occasion to the LORD to deliver himself in the manner he did, on the great subject of the resurrection; that, by putting it on its own proper basis, the Church, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, might have blessed scriptural proofs of the same. And by the miracle which followed CHRIST's discourse with *Martha*, in the LORD's giving such a palpable demonstration of its reality in the resurrection of *Lazarus*, there might be a foundation for faith to rest upon in the cordial belief of it.

And now let the Reader attend to the sublime words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which, as CHRIST, he uttered. And may GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Glorifier of JESUS, give them a deep impression, both upon the Reader's heart and mine. JESUS *said, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* What words are these? What a palpable proof they carry with them of the Almightiness of the Speaker? Who, but the living and true GOD in CHRIST, could ever use such language? Who but He, who is *one with the* FATHER, *over all* GOD, *blessed for ever*, could prove the truth of it?

And what I beg the Reader more especially also to mark with me, in those unequalled words of CHRIST, is, that JESUS spake them in his glorious character of Mediator. Not as GOD *only*, for in that case, though it would be without doubt no less than the sovereign act of Him that alone can give life, to re-animate, by renewing life, yet JESUS, though raising the dead, could not in this case be said to be *himself the Resurrection.* Neither as man *only*, would the act, which is truly divine, have been possible. But, in the union of both, as GOD-MAN-Mediator, JESUS himself, personally, and peculiarly, becomes the resurrection and the life, for it could belong to no other. Hence the LORD JESUS had before said to the Jews, *Destroy this temple,* (meaning his body,) *and I* (meaning his divine nature,) *will raise it up.* John ii. 19. See the Commentary on that passage, from John ii. 18—22. And thus CHRIST becomes the Resurrection and the Life to his redeemed, both in the *spiritual* resurrection of grace, from the death of the soul by sin, in the Adam-nature of a fallen state, and at the last day, from the *natural* resurrection of the body, become dead through sin, and sleeping in JESUS unto the consummation of all things. In both, CHRIST is the resurrection and the life, being the life-giving source in himself to all his members both in body and

soul, communicating life, both spiritual and eternal, from Himself to them, for grace here, and glory hereafter.

As this view of the subject is on every account very highly interesting, I would request the Reader's attention to it yet somewhat more particularly.

That CHRIST is *the Resurrection and the Life*, spiritually considered, in relation to the first awakening from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, I can hardly suppose the Reader to be altogether unconscious. Every one that reads his Bible, must have been led to see, that in the Adam-nature in which the Church, as well as all the world is born, all are, in consequence, *dead in trespasses and sins*. And hence the word of GOD, when speaking of the Church's recovery from this spiritual death, speaks of it as a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. *And you* (saith the Apostle,) *hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* Ephes. ii. 2, 3. But that this spiritual life imparted to the Church, is the result of a grace-union with CHRIST, by virtue of a being in him, and with him, before all worlds; this is not so generally considered. And very certain it is, that *Martha*, the sister of *Lazarus*, with whom CHRIST was then conversing, had not at that time the smallest apprehension of it. But it is a great point for the Church of GOD to regard. For it is in consequence of this oneness between CHRIST and his people, before all worlds, that this recovery from the *Adam-fall* is accomplished in all his members. JESUS is to them, spiritually considered, the resurrection and the life. He is their head, and they are his body. Hence, he himself is the life-giving source of their renewed life in him, and from him, by which they are united to himself, and *because he lives, they live also.* It is by virtue of this membership in CHRIST, that they are awakened, regenerated, born again, arise from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, and are *translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of* GOD's *dear* SON. Of such the LORD JESUS saith, with peculiar emphasis of expression, *I am the resurrection and the life.*

But we must not stop here. JESUS adds, *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.* Redeemed souls in CHRIST are subject to temporal death, as well as the graceless. They are appointed to taste the *fruit* of Adam's sin, though, from their union with CHRIST, they are delivered from the *curse* of it. And, in respect to those that live and believe in CHRIST, they who are so found when CHRIST shall come *the second time, without sin unto salvation,* Heb. ix. 28. shall not die even in body, but *be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the* LORD *in the air.* 1 Thess. iv. 17. And those who die in body before, die *only* in body. Their spirits live with CHRIST to the great day. Luke xxiii. 43. Heb. xii. 23.

But, added to all these considerations, we must consider, according to scripture authority, the LORD JESUS as *the resurrection and the life*, to all the members of his mystical body, in a different point of view

from that of the ungodly world, in the manner in which the bodies of his saints, which sleep in JESUS, will arise at the last day, from this communicating principle, as their resurrection and life. I beg the Reader for a few moments attention also under this particular.

It is a solemn scripture, but most sure and certain. *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the* SON *of* GOD, *and shall come forth. They that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* John v. 28, 29. But here lies the essential difference in these characters. As the object and end for which they arise is totally different, so also will be the means and course of their resurrection. The sovereign voice of Almighty JESUS will rouse up dead sinners to the sentence of eternal judgment. At his command both earth and the sea shall give up their dead. But not so the dead in CHRIST will arise. They died *in* JESUS when they died. They were united *to* the LORD in death. And so shall they be in their resurrection. For so saith the scripture. *If the* SPIRIT *of Him that raised up* JESUS *from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up* CHRIST *from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his* SPIRIT *which dwelleth in you.* Rom. viii. 11. By virtue of their union with Him they arise. And hence, in this instance, as in the former, CHRIST is to them *the Resurrection and the Life.* I hope the Reader will at least enter into an apprehension of this subject; and if so, and the LORD be his teacher, he will have to enjoy numberless very sweet views of the LORD JESUS in this most blessed character, as he stands related to his people, *the Resurrection and the Life.*

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, the Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Here are many interesting things said in these verses, which, had we room to enlarge upon, would afford ample subject for meditation. The call of *Mary;* the company of the Jews; their observations; and the affecting interview of CHRIST with the sisters, when *Mary* fell at his feet, with the reiterating what *Martha* had said before; these are all capable of calling forth much matter for improvement. But I pass the whole by, in order to direct the Reader to have his mind solely engaged in contemplating CHRIST. Every incident in this memorable event becomes tenfold interesting from its relation to JESUS. And it were to lose sight of the great object for which the HOLY GHOST caused it to be recorded, to be looking to any other.

The tears of JESUS open an endless subject for contemplation. I dare not, for sure I am I cannot, explain the wonderful circumstance in a thousandth part of it. Nevertheless, in a matter which interests the Church of GOD so highly, I must not be wholly silent. JESUS *wept.* Yes! Reader! it is our mercy that the LORD JESUS perfectly knew, and as truly felt the whole of what human nature is in all its parts, *yet without sin.* Had it been otherwise, he would have been man in appearance, and not in reality. Whereas, the HOLY GHOST expressly saith, 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 to* GOD, *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.* Heb. ii. 17, 18.

Let us only attend for a few moments to the necessity of the measure, according to what the HOLY GHOST here saith. *It behoved him to be so.* The original marriage and union between CHRIST and his Church made it so. For had the SON of GOD taken upon him the nature of angels, what union would our nature have had with him? But it is expressly said, that *he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* Heb. ii. 16. It was essentially necessary also, that the SON of GOD should become man, not only to marry, and to take into union with himself his spouse the Church as one nature, but also for the purpose of redeeming that nature from the Adam-transgression into which that nature fell. The right of redemption was by the law belonging to the next of kin. Levit. xxv. 25. It could be redeemed by no other. Hence it behoved the SON of GOD, under both these grand and indispensible obligations, to take upon him our nature, and to be united to it. And this union was to be *in all points.* He was to be very and truly man, as he was very and truly GOD. All the sinless infirmities of our nature to know, and feel, in

order that he might not only know them as GOD, but feel them as man. And it was by this very process alone, that he became fitted for our High Priest and Mediator. Most blessedly GOD the HOLY GHOST bears testimony to this, when by his servant the Apostle, he saith, *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; 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.* Heb. v. 1, 2.

Reader! pause over this blessed view of JESUS, for it is indeed most blessed. Thy GOD, thy Husband, thy JESUS, felt in his human nature, yet without sin, all that thou feels. He wept, groaned in spirit, knew sorrow, temptation, soul-agonies, hunger, thirst, weariness, affliction, persecution, and the long train of human evils which frail flesh is subject to, in this time-state of the Church. Before that holy portion of our nature which he took into union with the GODHEAD, should put on that glory which is the ultimate design for which he took it, it behoved him to be cloathed with all the sinless infirmities with which his Church is cloathed. And, oh! the unspeakable blessedness of thus viewing CHRIST, thus knowing him, and going to him, under all our exercises! When upon earth, behold how he entered into the feelings of his people; and how their sorrows called forth the groans of his heart! And now in heaven, the sweetest of all thoughts is, that his nature is not changed, but his feeling is the same. All the affections of tenderness in JESUS, in his human nature, however highly glorified that nature is, are as truly so now as when below. He that wept upon earth at the sorrows of his redeemed, hath the everlasting continuance of the same tender feelings for them now he is in heaven. Reader! let you and I never lose sight of it, but always seek for grace to keep in remembrance those sweet views of JESUS, as often as we read, JESUS wept!

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid, and Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always:

but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Reader! let you and I, by faith, take our stand also at the mouth of the cave. Never, surely, excepting in the instance of the triumphs of JESUS himself over death, at his own resurrection, was there such a marvellous work ever wrought upon earth! Oh! what an unanswerable testimony did it carry with it of CHRIST'S power! And, oh! what a precious pledge it afforded of the great purpose of CHRIST'S mission, in thus bringing life and immortality to light by his sovereignty and grace. And I beg the Reader to have a special regard to what JESUS said, when addressing his FATHER. Not to seek aid, for the LORD thanks his FATHER for having, in what was past, heard him. And every little in this miracle proved it to be solely his own. But it was wrought as GOD-Man; as *the Resurrection and the Life*. And it became a full confirmation of what the LORD JESUS had before said, that *as the* FATHER *had life in himself, so had he given to the* SON *to have life in himself; and had given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the* SON *of Man*. John v. 26, 27. See the Commentary on those verses.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Reader! be not in the least astonished at the different effects the sight of *Lazarus* coming forth from the grave wrought on the lookers-on. It must have been so then. It is so now. It will be at the great day of the universal resurrection of all men. The *many* which are here said to have believed, are like those in all ages of the Church which belong to CHRIST, concerning whom the LORD said, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*. John x. 27. The *some* which went their way to the *Pharisees*, to seek accusation against JESUS, are the representatives of all those in every age of the Church, which belong not to JESUS, but of whom he saith, *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you!* John x. 26. And what will it be at the last day but the same? When the Infidel of every description and character shall see with open eye, and be then awfully convinced; it will be a conviction not to believe and be

saved, but the forced conviction of believing and be lost. For so the LORD speaks, John xvii. 21—23. Rev. i. 7.

47 ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider, that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

Every thing here is very interesting, but I have already exceeded my limits, and therefore shall only detain the Reader with request-

ing his attention to what the Evangelist hath recorded, of the memorable prophecy of *Caiaphas.*

It is worthy the closest attention of the Reader, that the dying Patriarch *Jacob* should have left so memorable a prophecy, concerning the gathering of the people to *Shiloh.* Gen. xlix. 10. And that here again, as if to remind the Church of GOD of it, after so many ages had run out, GOD the HOLY GHOST, who taught the faithful *Jacob* to utter such a prophecy; should have put the fellow of it in the mouth of this infidel *Caiaphas* to the same amount. But what cannot the LORD accomplish? By friend, or foe, the LORD will bring about his holy will, as best suits his sovereign purpose. *Even the Wrath of man shall praise him.* Psm. lxxvi. 10. Reader! do not overlook the sweet feature in both prophecies. *To Him* (the *Shiloh,* said *Jacob,*) *shall the gathering of the people be!* He shall gather together in one, (the Evangelist explains was the burden of *Caiaphas'* prophecy) *the children of* GOD *that were scattered abroad.* Yes! this is the first, and ultimate design of the whole Covenant of grace. CHRIST hath a people, his children; yea, the children of GOD, for GOD hath from all eternity given them to him. In this time-state, they were lost, were scattered abroad. *My Sheep* (saith the LORD by the spirit of prophecy,) *wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.* Ezek. xxxiv. 6. But to Him, they must all be gathered. *Not an hoof shall be left behind.* Exod. x. 26. *In that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, they shall come which were ready to perish.* Isaiah xxvii. 13. John vi. 37.

But what a wonderful subject, that GOD the HOLY GHOST should make use of such a monster of iniquity, to utter so blessed a prophecy. True indeed the man meant what he said, in a very different sense. Yes! But there is the blessedness of the LORD's working by contrary means; and rendering that, which he meant for evil, to be productive of the greatest good. And Scripture abounds with unconscious instances to the same amount. The sons of *Jacob* selling *Joseph,* Gen. xlv. 7, 8. *Haman,* for the destruction of *Mordecai.* Esther vii. 10. And infinitely more, and above all, the *Jews* crucifying the LORD of life and glory! Acts ii. 23.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a blessed thing it is, when at any time, upon the sickness of our friends or ourselves, we are enabled to tell JESUS, as those sorrowful sisters did: LORD! *behold he whom thou lovest is sick!* Oh! the privilege of knowing the LORD, and knowing that we are beloved by him! Reader! do you know the sweetness of thus daily, yea, sometimes hourly, going to the court of this gracious heavenly King, and receiving a look, a love-token, from JESUS himself, amidst the crouds which attend his Levee? And my soul observe: Reader do you also observe, how graciously the LORD proposed to visit the sorrowful family of *Lazarus,* under their bereaving providence. And although *two days* elapsed before he went, yet this delay was all in greater mercy, as the sequel of the history proved. Learn then from hence, how to interpret silence in the LORD. It is for the greater glory of the LORD, and the greater good of his people.

Reader! look, and look again, to the LORD, as he approached the grave of him whom he loved. Oh! that I had the power of persuasion, methinks I would call all whom JESUS loves, and who love JESUS, to take their stand there, and by faith, and behold the SON of GOD in our nature, shedding tears and groaning in spirit, over the sad consequence of sin, in our death. And didst thou, dearest LORD, mingle thy tears with ours, at such a sight. Didst thou indeed give such a proof, that *because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, thou thyself hast taken part of the same?* Oh! for grace to have it always in remembrance. JESUS *wept.* JESUS knows, and hath felt, what human sorrows are. Never, never my soul be thou afraid to go to him, in all thy afflictions. He that wept at the grave of *Lazarus,* and took part in the weepings of the sorrowful sisters, will take part in thine. *He knoweth thy frame, and remembereth that thou art dust.*

Hail! thou that *livest and wast dead; and behold thou art alive for evermore.* Still by the ear of faith, I hear thy soul-reviving, body-quickening words: *I am the resurrection and the life!* LORD JESUS! give me that sweet earnest and pledge of the first resurrection in grace, here below; and sure I am that in thee, and from thee, I shall have part in the resurrection to glory hereafter. And dearest LORD! while my soul rejoiceth in hope of the glory of GOD; in the awful character of this High Priest *Caiaphas,* and in all the awful characters beside in every generation, which like those who went their way to the *Pharisees,* unconvinced at the resurrection of *Lazarus;* most fully deciding that grace alone makes all the difference; teach me to whom to look, and to whom to ascribe the source of all my mercies. *Though one arose from the dead,* such will not believe. And wherein LORD do I differ from them, but what grace hath made? Oh! prepare me, by living wholly *upon* thee, deriving all *from* thee, and ascribing all *to* thee; for the great and awful day of my GOD, when the dead shall hear thy voice, and come forth; *some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt.* In that all-decisive hour, be thou to me *the resurrection and the life, and my portion for ever.*

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS *is at a Supper.* Mary *anointeth his Feet. He entereth Jerusalem, as foretold by the Prophet. He maketh a very blessed Discourse; and is answered by a Voice from Heaven.*

THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spike-

nard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

The Passover here mentioned, was the *fourth* during our LORD's ministry. JESUS was looking forward to it with peculiar satisfaction; and he very earnestly wished to eat it with his disciples before his death. Luke xxii. 15. With the celebration of this Passover, the ordinance of it was to cease for ever. CHRIST, the substance, being come, to which it all along ministered; the shadow died away. Heb. ix. 26. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. Coloss. ii. 17.

I hope the Reader will pause with me to remark, with what earnestness those lovers of JESUS sought after his company. Here were two Suppers made for CHRIST, in one week; and both in *Bethany*. This, here spoken of, at the house of *Lazarus* and his sisters; which was *six* days before the Passover. And that, at the house of *Simon* the Leper, which was but two days preceding it. Compare Matt. xxvi. 2—6, with what is here said. The Reader, if he be a lover of JESUS, will not be surprized, that the company of the LORD should be so sought after. See how the Church longed for it! Song i. 7. 13. See how the faithful individual in the Church desired it. Psm. ci. 2. See how JESUS hath all along promised it to his people. Rev. iii. 20. Song v. 2.

There is somewhat beautifully interesting, in the account given of *Mary*, anointing the feet of CHRIST. I feel a certain undescribable

pleasure, while I read it. What a wonderful condescension in CHRIST, when it be considered who CHRIST is! What a privilege to the woman, when considered who she was! There are in it, many things which interest our feelings, as we read the relation. And very sure I am, had it not been in itself important, never would it have been recorded, and handed down as it is, through all ages by the HOLY GHOST, for the mediation of the Church of GOD. JESUS himself took notice of that instance of it, which took place in the house of *Simon* the leper; and declared that it should be as memorable as his Gospel. See Matt. xxvi. 7—13. And the LORD appears to have taken equal pleasure, in the instance of the poor woman, which anointed his feet in the house of *Simon* the *Pharisee*. See Luke vii. 37.

It may not be amiss to remark, that though some, through mistake, have confounded those acts of the *Maries*, as if they were one and the same; yet very certain it is, that they were different persons, and the acts themselves were at different times, and places, and upon different occasions. *Mary* the sister of *Lazarus*, as this scripture relates, anointed CHRIST's feet. The other woman, (if her name was *Mary*, for it is not said,) which anointed CHRIST, in the house of *Simon* the *leper*, poured the costly ointment on his *head*. And both these again, differed from the instance recorded Luke vii. 37. For that was in the house of *Simon* the *Pharisee*. And both the former were in *Bethany:* this latter in *Galilee*. Perhaps the mistake arose from the name of *Simon*. For JESUS was anointed twice in the house of *Simon*. But then it was not the same house, nor the same person. The one was *Simon the Pharisee*, and the other *Simon the Leper*. So that it is most clear and evident there were *three* of those anointings of the LORD JESUS, while upon earth.

But while I thought it right to put this matter in a clear light; I think it yet more to our purpose, to consider, as far as we have ability to do so, under divine teaching, what may be supposed as veiled under it. JESUS hath informed the Church, in relation to one of those acts, that it was an anointing for his burial. Matt. xxvi. 12, 13. Probably, *Mary* herself had no consciousness of this, when she found her mind prompted to the deed. And how often are the LORD's people under such influences, in administering to the mystical body of CHRIST; and they themselves not in the least apprehensive of it? One thing is certain. JESUS hath noticed such love tokens in his people. And blessedly the Church speaks of her enjoyments, when in those hallowed seasons, she found her soul going forth in the exercises of faith and love, upon the Person of CHRIST; and when her Spikenard sent forth the smell of those graces the LORD had given her, while *the king himself sat at the table!* Song iii. 12. There is much in the expression; the house filled with the odour of the ointment. CHRIST's house, the Church, both in heaven and on earth, is filled with the odour of his Person. Song i. 3.

12 ¶ On the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth

to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

In addition to what was offered by way of observation, on the similar passage to this, on our LORD's entrance into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi, to which I refer: I would beg to remark, (and to remark it with suitable emphasis) that the *Hosannas*, which were offered to JESUS, could be offered to him in no other light, but as the CHRIST of GOD. The words were applicable to none but CHRIST. For the Psalmist, under the spirit of prophecy, a thousand years before, so expressed himself. Psm. viii. with Heb. ii. 6—9. Psm. cxviii. 25, 26. with Acts iv. 11, 12. And the recollection, which the disciples are said to have had of those things in the after day of the Church, when their understanding had been opened by the coming of the HOLY GHOST; very decidedly proves, that the sole application of those words, and the scriptures referring to them, could be to no other than the LORD JESUS. Reader! I entreat you to be very cheery of those things; their testimony is precious! John vii. 39. John xiv. 26. Acts i. 8.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

20 ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

The Reader, if his views are at all in correspondence with mine, will not be offended that I so often call him, to remark the awful character of those *Pharisees*. It is not surely without design, that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath interspersed so much of their history, worthless as it is, with that of CHRIST, which is so infinitely endearing; but with an eye to the Church's improvement. The LORD knew, that such characters from generation to generation would arise, like weeds, in the garden of the Church; and scatter their baleful seed in every direction. The LORD therefore hath marked their prominent appearances, that they may be everlastingly distinguished from plants of the LORD's right hand planting, and separated from what is pure. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* They profess great sanctity of character, great zeal for promoting their own tenets, they long to proselyte the world; they abound, or would have the world suppose they abound, in good deeds, alms-giving, and unbounded charity. But in the same moment, they burn with the bitterest rancour of heart against that faith in CHRIST, as their forefathers, the *Pharisees* in CHRIST's days, did before them; which hangs the whole of salvation upon the Person, Blood, and Righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST only. They desire it may be considered, that they profess CHRIST, and hope to be saved by CHRIST: but they consider their good works, as partly recommendations. To rob them of these, would be like *Micah's* gods taken from him, having nothing left. Judges xviii. 24. They have never known, neither felt, the plague of their own hearts; and therefore are more in enmity against the faith once delivered to the saints, than the openly profane. May the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath so graciously watched over his Church, in holding forth so frequently the awful history of such men, keep his people from being tainted with their doctrine. Luke xii. 1.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

What a blessed discourse we have of our LORD's in those few, but striking verses! All the great events approaching, no doubt arose to

the view of his divine mind. And never surely did the glory of JESUS break forth with equal lustre during the whole of his ministry upon earth, than in the garden and on the cross. The triumphs of the SON of GOD incarnate, in those seasons, far exceeded all the miracles of his former ministry. It was by death, JESUS conquered death. He was indeed crucified in weakness; but in that weakness, sin, death, hell, and the grave, were overcome. The LORD entered their territories, and destroyed their empire for ever. Then was that glorious prophecy fulfilled, which ages before, the LORD had spoken by the Prophet: *I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.* Zech. iii. 9.

If I trespass a little longer on the Reader's time, in meditating on these sweet verses of our LORD; it shall only be to observe, the beauty of that similitude which the LORD JESUS was pleased to make use of, in allusion to his own death; when describing it, under the figure of a corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, thereby to bring forth much fruit. And if it be true, as it is said, that corn is nearly the only grain, if not the only, which must die before it can take root: the image is yet more beautiful and express. And if it be further true, as it is said, that pure corn falling into a moist and favourable soil, begins to put on the appearance of a change the *third day* from the time sown, the figure increaseth in its similarity, considered as to the third day, CHRIST arose from the dead. But passing by these things, I beg the Reader to attend to such points in the similitude, as are most obvious and unquestionable.

When our LORD saith, that except a corn of wheat *fall* into the ground, JESUS did not mean that wheat falls by accident and without design, into the earth. For corn is too highly prized, and in itself too highly valuable, to be thus dealt with. The Husbandman, who is said *to wait for the precious fruit of the earth;* is also supposed to observe *seed time and harvest. For his* GOD (saith the Prophet,) *doth instruct him to discretion.* See James v. 7. Gen. viii. 22. Isaiah xxviii. 24—29. And CHRIST, that one, single, pure, and invaluable grain of Corn, did not fall into the ground of our nature, nor die to bring forth fruit to his Church, without design; for the whole of his mission was *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of* GOD. *My* FATHER (saith JESUS,) *is the Husbandman.* Acts ii. 23. John xv. 1.

And as corn wheat is the most precious of all grain, so our nature in the Person of CHRIST, is the most precious of all seed. *He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* Heb. vii. 26. And as the bread which perisheth with using, is necessary to support our bodies, and therefore called *the staff of life:* so CHRIST *the living bread which came down from heaven,* is essential to give life to our souls: and therefore called the bread of life. JESUS saith, *he that eateth of it shall live for ever.* And, to add no more; as the corn of the earth must be bruised, in order to be worked up into food for our natural life; so *it pleased the* FATHER *to bruise* CHRIST, *and put him to grief,* that he might become the true sustenance for our spiritual life, that we might eat and live for ever. Isaiah liii. 10. Yea, so very necessary is it that all his mystical body should eat of this bread, that JESUS himself saith: *Except ye eat of the*

flesh of the SON *of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* John vi. 48. &c.

But the striking feature of similitude in this verse remains yet to be considered, in that of the corn falling into the ground and dying, without which it remaineth alone; but by dying, bringeth forth much fruit. Here CHRIST is eminently set forth. For had not JESUS fallen into the ground of this our world, had he remained alone, without taking our nature into union with the divine: yea, even if taking that holy portion of our nature into union with the GODHEAD, yet had he not died to redeem his Church from the Adam-transgression into which she had fallen; still he would in that case have been like pure corn not earthed, and consequently without fruit. He might indeed have derived all that personal glory, which belongs to him as GOD-Man: neither would he in that sense, have been said to be alone, because he would still have been in his divine nature One with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, in the essence of the GODHEAD over all GOD blessed for ever; and in this sense he might have said, as upon another occasion he did say: *I am not alone because the* FATHER *is with me.* John xvi. 32. But in relation to his body the Church: she must have remained without the possibility of recovery, in the awful state of the *dead in trespasses and sins,* in which the whole nature was involved by the means of Adam's transgression; and so must have continued unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed, and without hope, and without GOD for ever. Reader! pause over the subject. Behold the love of GOD in CHRIST which passeth all understanding. GOD the FATHER will not suffer those whom he hath given to his dear SON thus to perish. GOD the SON will not leave his spouse the Church, notwithstanding all her adulteries, so to be everlastingly ruined. GOD the HOLY GHOST will regenerate the Church, whom he hath loved in CHRIST before all worlds. JESUS, therefore, the pure, the single grain of corn, falls into the ground, and by dying, brings forth fruit; yea a full compleat harvest, of every individual seed, which were his seed from all eternity: and finally gathers the whole into the garner of heaven. *Oh! the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of* GOD! *how unsearchable are his judgments; and his ways past finding out.* Rom. xi. 33. Psm. cxxvi. 5, 6. Isaiah lix. 21. Matt. xiii. 24—52.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying,* I have both glorified *it,* and will glorify *it* again.

29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it,* said that *it* thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

In reading the first of these verses, in consequence of the words of the LORD JESUS being improperly marked in the stops, the sense is apt to be overlooked. The LORD speaks of his soul being troubled. And, as the words are in our Bibles, it seems to convey an idea, as if the LORD was at a loss what to say. *And what shall I say?* But this could not be the case. He, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* could never pause, by way of considering what to say. Neither do our LORD's words convey any such meaning, when the words themselves are placed as they ought to have been. *Now is my soul troubled. And what. Shall I say* FATHER *save me from this hour?* As if the LORD had said. *Now is my soul troubled.* And what if it be so. Shall I call upon the FATHER to save me from this hour? Oh! no. This were to defeat the very purpose for which I came. *But for this cause came I unto this hour.* I will therefore say, FATHER *glorify thy Name.* By reading the verse in this manner, we have the whole rendered perfectly clear and intelligible. And what a blessed view, the words give us of the LORD JESUS, at this solemn season. He had in full prospect before him, those tremendous exercises both of body and soul, which as the Head and Surety of his people, he had to go through. He felt, all that human nature could feel, upon the occasion. (See Heb. v. 7, 8. 9.) But in the midst of all, nothing of personal sorrow would he allow to stand in the way to obstruct the divine glory. Yea, the LORD intimated by his expressions, that in those humiliations, the divine glory should be the more manifested.

And the answer from heaven became the most blessed confirmation of what CHRIST had said. *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* This was the *third* time, during our LORD's ministry upon earth, in which GOD the FATHER had publicly proclaimed his perfect approbation to the Person, and Office-work, as Mediator, of his dear SON. Once, at CHRIST's entrance upon it at his baptism, Matt. iii. 16, 17. Once again at *Mount Tabor,* at the transfiguration. Matt. xvii. 5. And now just before the close of his ministry, in the garden, and at the cross. I beg the Reader to ponder the subject well, for it is most blessed. All the words of the LORD are precious words, when at any time he speaks in love and mercy to his Church. But those are eminently so, in which GOD the FATHER, or GOD the HOLY GHOST, speak to CHRIST as Mediator. For they confirm CHRIST's authority, and prove that he was called of GOD, to be the servant and High Priest of JEHOVAH, as was *Aaron.* Heb. v. 4, 5. The perfection of CHRIST's person, and the perfection of his office, as our surety, are blessed things. But it forms a most essential part to our assurance in pleading both before GOD, when we can and do tell him, that the LORD himself both ordained the plan of mercy, and consecrated CHRIST his dear SON into the office of performing it. For when CHRIST took both the names and the nature of his people, to bear their sins, and to become their righteousness; the whole was in consequence of covenant-agreement between the persons of the GODHEAD. Hence the Church is represented as pleading this in prayer, and in which every child of GOD, truly taught of GOD, finds joy and comfort to join. *Behold, O* GOD! *our shield! and look upon the face of thine anointed!* Psalm lxxxiv. 9.

In relation to the soul-troubles of CHRIST, and GOD's glorifying his

name in CHRIST; these are subjects in which our most earnest enquiries go but a little way. Who indeed can be competent to the apprehension of the soul agonies of the Redeemer, when the frowns and rebukes of his FATHER, as the Sinner's Surety, went so near, as he saith himself, *to break his heart.* Psm. lxix. 20. And we must be possessed of somewhat more than human, or even angelic intellect, before we can enter into an apprehension of the full extent of the glory of JEHOVAH's name, in the great events connected with the person and offices of CHRIST. It may not be improper, however, to attend to the scriptural account of this wonderful subject, in order to gather some few glimpses of the LORD's manifested glory, when in answer to CHRIST's prayer for the glorifying of his name, the LORD said, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

That JEHOVAH in his three-fold character of person can receive no possible addition to his *essential* glory, by any act of his creatures, is a truth which both Scripture and reason loudly confirm. The everlasting obedience of the whole creation of GOD, had it been so without interruption, could not have added to GOD's glory. Yea, the obedience and death of CHRIST did not. For the being and glory of JEHOVAH is incapable of accession or increase. And hence CHRIST himself, under the spirit of prophecy, saith, *My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* Psm. xvi. 2, 3. But, there is a glory which the LORD hath been pleased to manifest of himself, in his three-fold character of person, in covenant engagements towards the Church, whereby his name is glorified in every display of it, when at any time the LORD is pleased to make it known in any of the departments of nature, providence, and grace. And it is in this sense we are to consider the words of the LORD, when in answer to CHRIST's prayer, GOD the FATHER said, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

And hath not the LORD done so, in all the revelations he hath been pleased to make of himself, in his three-fold character of person, when in CHRIST, GOD-MAN united, he hath communicated all that is capable of communication, in relation to his love to the Church from all eternity? Hath he not glorified himself to our apprehension, in the personal glory put upon CHRIST, as GOD-MAN, when before a single revelation was made of him to the Church, yea, before the Church had been called into being, in this time-state of her existence, CHRIST was set up from everlasting, the wonder of heaven, the adoration of angels, and the present, future, and eternal *praise of all his saints?* Prov. viii. 22, 23. Isa. ix. 6. Heb. i. 6. Psm. cxlviii. 14.

And, to come down to the time-state of the Church, when we behold with what a vast apparatus JEHOVAH introduced CHRIST into the world, commanding all the angels to worship him, and the Church to love and adore him, what greater demonstrations could be given of JEHOVAH's glorifying his name, than in such decided tokens of glory? In short, what is the Bible itself, from beginning to end, but one continued manifestation of JEHOVAH's glory, set forth and magnified in all the riches of it, in the Person, Work, Offices, Relations, and Characters of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? And what but JEHOVAH's glory is the ultimate object of the innumerable instances of love shewn to the

Church in the FATHER's favor, the Redeemer's grace, and the communion and fellowship of the HOLY GHOST? Rev. iv. 11.

And, as in every manifestation JEHOVAH hath glorified his name in all that is past, so will he glorify it again in all that is to come. Particularly in reference (as this scripture might be supposed to have in view) to what remained, in the personal work and offices of CHRIST. GOD's glory had been displayed in the whole of CHRIST's ministry to the present hour, and GOD the FATHER engaged that it should be to the end. And when did ever the glory of GOD shine with more lustre than in the day of CHRIST on the cross, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Reader! let you and I attend to those gracious words of our GOD and FATHER to his dear SON, as they relate to the divine glory in JESUS CHRIST; and then, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, we shall have a more sure word to take heed to, than all our own reasonings, or all those men here spoken of debated upon, whether it thundered, or whether it was an angel which spake to Jesus.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

I only pause over those verses to remark, what a beautiful correspondence there is between what the LORD JESUS here saith of divine drawing, and the uniform language of scripture on this point. The gracious act belongs to the whole persons of the GODHEAD, and every poor sinner drawn to CHRIST hath the witness in himself that it is so. Read these scriptures in proof. Jer. xxxi. 3. John vi. 44. John vi. 63. 1 John v. 7.

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see *with* their eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

I have only to lament that the limits of a Poor Man's Commentary will not grant me the indulgence to enlarge as I could wish on this very blessed discourse of CHRIST. Every verse, more or less, is full of divine instructions. But I will only detain the Reader on that part of it which respects the vision of *Esaias*, which is here most decidedly declared to be the glory of CHRIST which he saw. And the Reader will observe, that the observation is not the Evangelist's, but GOD the HOLY GHOST's. In proof, I beg of him first to read the Prophet's own account of it, Isaiah vi. Then I wish him to consult Acts xxviii. 26, 27. And when he hath done both these things, let the Reader himself determine what less than the glory of GOD could have been set forth in the presence of CHRIST, in that vision which the Prophet saw. The train of the LORD, which filled the temple, was a beautiful representation of GOD in his divine nature filling the temple of CHRIST's body, agreeably to what the HOLY GHOST hath said, that *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the* GODHEAD *bodily*. Coloss. ii. 9. GOD the HOLY GHOST be praised and adored; *first*, for explaining to the Church the Prophet's vision; and, *secondly*, in causing it to be recorded for the everlasting instruction and comfort of the Church in all ages.

REFLECTIONS.

PONDER well, my soul, the many blessed things contained in this chapter concerning thy GOD and SAVIOR. And while thou beholdest the gracious condescension of JESUS in the days of his flesh, granting his sweet presence and divine discourses, in supping with his people, as in the house of *Lazarus*, and *Simon* the *Leper*; do not for a moment question, but that now, in the day of his power, he will come, as he hath said, and sup with his people, and cause them by faith to sup with him. And what though thou hast no costly ointment, as *Mary* had, to anoint thy LORD's feet, yet, when JESUS comes, he will bring every thing that is blessed with him. Remember, that thy LORD comes not to receive, but to give, not that He may be made more blessed, for that is impossible, but that thou mayest be made more happy. It is enough when through his grace enabling them, his people lay low at his feet, and *while the king sitteth at the table* of his own providing, he will cause the spikenard of his own graces, called forth into exercise from thine heart by his HOLY SPIRIT, *to send forth the smell thereof*.

Blessed LORD JESUS! may I never forget that soul trouble of thine which is here spoken of! Give me grace to meditate on the wondrous subject. Oh! for a solemnity of soul always suited to the contemplation. The very recollection is enough to damp all unsuited and unbecoming lightness of mind at all times. Did JESUS feel soul-heaviness on the account of his redeemed, and shall they be light minded? Did JESUS groan, and shall I be unconcerned? Blessed be my GOD and FATHER, who so graciously answered his dear SON by a

voice from heaven. And blessed be the LORD for his mercy to all his redeemed by the act, since it came for their sakes. And oh! for grace, to rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, in what GOD the FATHER then declared to his dear SON, concerning his Mediator-office and character, that the LORD had glorified his name, and will glorify it again, yea, for ever! And blessed be GOD for that precious assurance, more precious than the gold of Ophir, it was the glory of CHRIST, which *Esaias* saw when he spake of Him. It is, and everlastingly must be the glory of CHRIST, which is the joy of all his people. Oh! thou dear LORD! write these blessed words of thine in my heart, to lift up my soul with joy for ever: *I am come* (saith my LORD,) *a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness.*

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

The LORD *washeth his Disciples' Feet. He intimates to the Twelve, that One of them is a Traitor. The Sorrow of the Eleven at the Account.* Peter *is admonished of his Denial.*

NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Of the Passover much hath been already noticed in this Commentary on Matt. xxvi. 1, 2. and Mark xiv. 1, 2. to which I refer. I beg the Reader to remark with me, what is here said of the unalterable love of JESUS to *his own*. And I beg the Reader to attend to the sense of the words, *his own*. The words differ very widely from the same words, *his own*. John i. 11. For though they appear to an *English* Reader as one and the same, yet they are not so in the original. By *his own*, as it is rendered, John i. 11. is meant *his own* nation, the Jews. But here in this place, by *his own* is meant, his own Church, his own people, his own children, whom his FATHER gave to him *before the foundation of the world*. Ephes. i. 4. And the original words in the two passages make all this difference. The *former* means such as we are used to say of a person in relation to his own place of birth, it is his own country, his own town or people there dwelling. But the *latter* carries with it an idea of relationship and property, such as we should say of a man's wife or children, yea, his own flesh. So that the *one* implies no more, than that CHRIST and the nation to which he came, were countrymen. The *other* bespeaks his own house and family, his spouse the Church. Reader! do not fail to mark the vast difference, wherever you meet it. And never forget also, that CHRIST's love to his own is an everlasting love, or as the words themselves express, *to the end;* which end is eternity, unchangeable like CHRIST himself, *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. Heb. xiii. 8. Isaiah liv. 10.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God:

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

The supper here spoken of could not be what we call the LORD's Supper, which JESUS instituted in the place of the Passover; for this supper is said to have been before the feast of the Passover (ver. 1). See Luke xxii. 14—22. And moreover this was an ordinary supper: most probably the same as we read of Matt. xxvi. 2, 6, which *Simon* the Leper made for JESUS. Whereas the LORD's Supper was *after* the Passover. Matt. xxvi. 20—26. See Luke xxii. 7—13.

But I would more particularly beg the Reader's notice to what is related in this Chapter, of our LORD's washing his disciples' feet. And I desire his attention the rather, because *John* is the only one of the *four* Evangelists, whom the HOLY GHOST was pleased to appoint, to make this record. The circumstances indeed in it are so very singular, and the humbleness of our LORD in the act so striking: a service which was never performed by any but the very lowest of the servants in a family; that I confess I am inclined to think, there was somewhat of no small importance veiled under it. I am far from supposing, that I can throw any new light upon the subject: nevertheless, in a work of this kind, it would be wrong to pass it by unnoticed. May GOD the HOLY GHOST be our Teacher!

And here let us *first* observe how the subject is introduced. JESUS, knowing that *all things were given into his hands.* So that in the very moment when he knew himself, as GOD-MAN-MEDIATOR, to be the LORD, Proprietor, and Governor of heaven and earth; JESUS did that which the lowest of the sons of men, and such as are slaves, only perform. Let the impression which such a view of CHRIST's unbounded condescension ought to have upon the mind, be first considered by us; and then let us go on to another observation, which ariseth out of what the Evangelist hath said.

Secondly. It is added, that JESUS knew he was *come from* GOD, *and went to* GOD. With these thoughts before him, the LORD performs an act of service upon each of his disciples present; as if under the conviction, that now only could such an outward demonstration of his regard for them be given, because he was about to return to his FATHER, and for a while, *they would see him no more.* John xvi. 10.

Thirdly. The act itself of washing his disciples' feet, hath somewhat very striking in it. The manner in which the LORD set about it. The deliberate and personal way in which he did it to all: and the confinement of the thing itself to their feet only: these are certainly special, and particular characters, in which there is much signification. Some have supposed, that in this act of humiliation, of the LORD JESUS laying aside his garments, and putting on the towel of the menial servant; may be viewed, a beautiful representation of the SON of GOD laying aside his glory which he had with the FATHER before all worlds, and taking upon him the form of a servant, when he came to wash his people from their sins in his blood. And some

have thought, that the washing of his disciples' feet, and not their hands, was in reference to the Apostles as preachers of the Gospel; and that in this sense, the ceremony had an allusion to that scripture of the Prophet, when he saith: *how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings.* Isaiah lii. 7. But I confess, that in my apprehension, whatever the act itself of washing the feet implied, (for I do not presume to decide,) it was not intended by our LORD to be limited to his Apostles, as preachers of the word; but the whole Church, of which they were then the representatives, were included in it. For the LORD's answer to *Peter,* who modestly declined this service of CHRIST's, plainly proved, that it was of general importance to the whole Church: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

Fourthly. Another remarkable circumstance in this transaction, and which is highly in proof of its importance, is, that the LORD insisted upon it, as hath been just observed in answer to *Peter's* objection; while we are expressly told by the same Evangelist, that in respect to baptism, JESUS *himself baptized not, but his disciples.* John iv. 2. So that the LORD laid no stress upon his own baptizing of his disciples, yea, that he baptized none, and yet here the LORD layeth the greatest importance upon the washing himself his disciples feet, declaring that *if he washed them not, they had no part with him.* And which words of CHRIST, and probably spoken in a firm and decided manner, carried such conviction with them to the heart of *Peter,* that he cried out in great earnestness of desire for the LORD to do it; LORD! (saith he) *not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head.*

And, *lastly,* to mention no more. What can be more marvellous and astonishing, than to observe in this transaction, that *Judas,* as is most evidently the case, partook in this washing by CHRIST, in common with the other Apostles. This is as striking a particularity as either of the former. I have said that this was most evidently the case, for had *Judas* being passed over, and not washed, no sooner had JESUS finished the service, and had sat down again, when we are told, that he immediately declared that one of them should betray him. Now had Judas not been washed with the rest, it would have been known by this omission which it was that would do this deed. Whereas we find the declaration of JESUS threw the whole into a consternation, and called forth the anxious question, one by one, LORD! *is it I?*

Let no child of GOD, however, be hurt, that *Judas* partook in this common act of washing the feet. For whatever grand points were intended from it by our LORD, the thing itself, like ordinances of all kinds, had no saving efficacy in it. The ministration of it most probably had some very blessed design in view, in reference to the LORD's own people. But to others it had none, but like the rain or dew of heaven, which falls upon the rocks and sands, and produceth nothing. There could be no more efficacy in the LORD's washing *Judas's* feet, than in his administering to him the LORD's Supper; and all the other ordinances he had in common with the Apostles. These are all *outward* things; and however sweet and refreshing they are made to the LORD's people, from the LORD's blessing upon them, it is that blessing which becomes the sole cause of usefulness, in their being accompanied with an *inward* grace. What the Apostle saith of

the ministration of the Gospel, may be said in relation to every thing connected with the Gospel. *We are* (saith he) *unto* GOD *a sweet savor of* CHRIST, *in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one, we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

And I take occasion from hence (and with such an awful character in view as *Judas*, who partook of those means of grace, but to his greater condemnation,) to remark, that it should seem our dear LORD intended from it to teach his people how to draw improvements to their comfort, rather than at any time to be discouraged at the unavoidable minglings with the ungodly, whether in ordinances, or elsewhere in the present world. JESUS knew that *Judas* was a devil, when he chose him to be an Apostle. John vi. 70. Notwithstanding this, the LORD permitted him to exercise all the *outward* acts of the Apostleship, until *the measure of his iniquity was full*, in betraying his master. But to shew his Church that this man, and every other man in like circumstances with him, had no part nor lot in the matter of salvation; JESUS declared, as soon as he had finished the washing, that though *they* (meaning his faithful ones) *were clean, yet not all*, said JESUS. For, added the Evangelist, *he knew who should betray him, therefore said he, ye are not all clean.* And, surely, from hence the Church is taught, never to feel concern when at any time the christless and despisers of the pure truths of GOD, mingle with the LORD's people at his house, or his table. For as the presence of *Judas* had no effect to injure the Apostles in those hallowed seasons with their LORD, so neither can devils, or bad men, hinder the blessed manifestations which the LORD makes to his own, when handing to them their portions in secret, and causing them to eat of the *hidden manna.* Rev. ii. 17. Yea, more than this. Such things sometimes are made to act, under the LORD's grace, as instruments in his hand, the better to form our views of distinguishing mercy. Many a child of GOD, when beholding the scoffers and ungodly around them, have been constrained to say with the Apostle, LORD! *how is it that thou shouldest manifest thyself unto me, and not unto the world?* And that sweet question hath been found to arise in the soul in all its gracious influence, *Who made thee to differ from another?* See John xiv. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 7. And it is blessed, yea, very blessed, both in ordinances and providences, to call to mind that the LORD JESUS himself purposely chose one among twelve men only, which attended his person, that was a devil, to be of the number, when the LORD's tried ones are compelled *to sojourn in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar.* Psalm cxx. 5. Job i. 6.

I have largely trespassed in entering into those several particulars as they struck my mind, respecting this wonderful act of CHRIST's washing his disciples feet. I again repeat that I do not speak decidedly upon what might or might not be the LORD's design in an act so very gracious. But there are two very sweet improvements, which, according to my apprehension of the subject, arise from it; and before we close our review of it, I would beg the Reader's indulgence to bring before him.

The *first* is, What a most endearing portrait hath GOD the HOLY GHOST given to the Church, by the pencil of the Evangelist, of the

person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? Can the imagination conceive any thing equally lovely, as in thus beholding the SON of GOD in our nature, washing the feet of poor fishermen? And what tends to give yet more the highest coloring of grace and mercy to the picture, it is drawn at that moment of all others, when Jesus *knew that the* FATHER *had given all things into his hands!* Reader! ponder it well. What a lesson is here taught to mortify the pride of human nature! While the great ones of the earth carry themselves so proudly, and will hardly condescend to behold the poor of the people, the King of heaven stoops to the lowest humiliation, and washeth his disciples' feet. Now I pray the Reader never to lose sight of this unequalled condescension of CHRIST. Shall you, or shall I, or shall any poor sinner, in the view of such clemency, evermore draw conclusions, as if it was beneath the dignity of the SON of GOD to regard his people, when we behold such a palpable proof of that regard, in an act so humbling? Did JESUS wash their feet, and will he not wash my soul? Did JESUS unasked, yea, when *Peter* refused him, persist to do such an act of grace, and will he turn a deaf ear to your or my earnest petitions? Can any child of GOD, in the contemplation of such love in the LORD, say, I am too low, too abject, too unworthy for JESUS to notice? Speak, ye humble souls! ye, who like those faithful Apostles, have tasted that the LORD is gracious, do you say, for you can tell, whether CHRIST'S exaltation and glory do not become the very grounds of your hope, that because he is exalted he will condescend, and because he is all glorious, he will be all merciful? Yea, say, doth not the LORD appear in your view the more blessed, when he appears the more condescending, and the more he stoops to look on you, doth he not appear the higher to your eyes. Precious LORD, in humbleness, as well as greatness, thou must have the pre-eminence! Coloss. i. 18.

The *other* improvement suggested to us from this blessed Scripture, is, in my view, equally endearing with the *former*, namely, how JESUS, by this act of washing his disciples' feet before his departure, intended to convince them, that the tendencies of his love to them would be the same after that he was gone. He knew (the Evangelist saith,) that *he was come from* GOD, *and went to* GOD; and under these impressions, he taketh the towel, and the water, and immediately begins to wash his disciples' feet. So that with his mind full of the glory to which he was then going, returning to his FATHER, and to all his redeemed gone before, yet he doth this to leave a palpable testimony behind him, that neither time nor place could alter his regard for them. But his last act upon earth, when in familiarity he was sitting down with them, should not be more expressive of affection than he would carry with him in all his remembrance of them in heaven. And as he could not do such an act then, when returned to glory, he did it now, as his last upon earth, that they might always have it in remembrance concerning him when he was gone, until he came again to take them home to himself, that where he was they should be also. John xiv. 3. Dearest LORD JESUS! may my soul have these things always in remembrance! And it will not be long before that He who washed his disciples feet will bring home his whole Church washed from all her sins in his blood, and become *a glorious Church, sanctified and cleansed, and made holy, and without blemish before him, in love!* Ephes. v. 25, 26.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled. He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

I would wish in this place to call the Reader's attention to the scriptural account of the character of *Judas*, the traitor; having passed over the history of this man in the preceding Evangelists, purposely to gather into one point of view the several particulars relating to him.

And, first, it will be proper to look at what is said of him in respect to the many great advantages he possessed, in being brought by the LORD himself to attend his person. He had the privilege of being always in the society of JESUS, and this not transiently, but for nearly three years and half. He had seen CHRIST's miracles, heard his divine discourses, and was in the daily habit of conversing with Him, *who spake as never man spake.* Add to these, he was sent forth to the service of the ministry, and beheld (at least the outward tokens of it,) what mighty events followed CHRIST's power. Matt. x. 1—8.

Let us next consider some of the many aggravated circumstances which attended the perfidy of his conduct. Without going over the ground in the numberless opportunities he had found of CHRIST's kindness to him in common with the other Apostles, we need have reference no further than to what is related in this Chapter. The LORD JESUS washed his feet. And when he had re-assumed his seat at the table, the gentle intimation JESUS made, that there was one present which would betray him, was enough in any breast less obdurate than *Judas*, to have stung him to the quick. Could any arrow of conviction have reached his heart, surely the one drawn and levelled by CHRIST would have penetrated. But there he sat, unmoved and hardened, up to all the possibilities of determined guilt. And while all the other Apostles were tremblingly alive at the bare suspicion only, that one of them could do such a thing as betray their Master; *Judas* sat, like another *Ætna*, with all the fire of hellish malice burning within, until the LORD had given to him the fatal sop, intended to identify the traitor, and then, and not before, he withdrew.

Nay, after all this, as if it was not enough to shew the desperately wicked state of his hardened heart, when he left the table, he must have gone away immediately to *Jerusalem*, which was two miles from *Bethany*, though it was now night, in order to concert schemes with the chief priests, the better to deliver CHRIST into their hands. For here we find him, as *Matthew* hath related, soon after, Matt. xxvi. 14, 15, 16. And during the whole of this solitary walk by night, from *Bethany* to the city, we read of no one compunction that he felt; neither during the *two days* which intervened between this evening and the Passover, is there the smallest intimation of any softenings or relentings in his mind. Yea, so much to the contrary, that we next hear of him as taking his place with the other Apostles at the Passover, and actually receiving at the LORD's hands the sacramental Supper, as if a faithful disciple.

And as all tenderness was lost upon the wretch, so the alarms of judgment had no effect also. For when he daringly headed the band of men and officers which went to apprehend CHRIST, and they all fell to the ground, when the LORD JESUS, to the question *whom seek ye?* answered, *I am he; Judas* must have fell with them. See John xviii. 2—6. But neither this miracle, nor every former; neither judgments nor mercies could affect *Judas.* Satan had taken the compleat possession of him, and *the last state of that man was worse than the first.* Luke xi. 26.

Reader! here let us pause, as we behold the awful history of one of whom the LORD JESUS said, *good were it for that man if he had never been born.* Mark xiv. 21. Let us look into the cause, and, under di-

vine teaching, we shall soon be led to discover it. The scriptures of GOD, in tracing effects to their source, have drawn the line of everlasting distinction between the precious and the vile, between the righteous and the wicked, between *him that serveth* GOD, *and him that serveth him not*, Malachi iii. 18. One of the Apostles in a single chapter hath done this business to our hand. He contemplates the Adam-apostacy of our whole nature, the Church, as well as the Christless, all alike involved in the ruin of a fallen state, and then marks the different features of character which distinguish the Church in her grace-union with CHRIST, from the seed of the serpent, which are for ever precluded from any possibility of salvation. Of the *former*, he describes them as *sanctified by* GOD *the* FATHER, *preserved in* JESUS CHRIST, *and called*. Of the *latter*, he declares, that *they were of old ordained to this condemnation*. And hence, as the lineal descendants of *Cain*, they have ran, and do run greedily after the error of *Balaam*, and must perish in the gainsaying of *Core*. Jude i. 4—11. And what further testimony doth GOD the HOLY GHOST give of all such, but such as the LORD JESUS himself gave of *Judas*. *Ye are of your father the devil*, (said CHRIST to some of this race,) *and the lusts of your father ye will do*. John viii. 44. And *John* follows up the same doctrine as his Master. For, speaking of *Cain*, he expressly saith, that *he was of that wicked one*. Not simply under the temptations of the devil, but *of him*. For he is speaking at the time, how *the children of* GOD *are manifest, and the children of the devil*. 1 John iii. 8—12. And *Judas* is not merely said to have been *tempted* of the devil, but that he *was* a devil, and *Satan entered into him*, took an entire possession of him. John vi. 70. Hence the enemy calls the heart of such *his house*. Luke xi. 24. Reader! ponder well the whole, for the doctrine is truly awful. But, remember the awfulness of it doth by no means lessen the truth of it. See, in confirmation, Psm. cix. 6, 7, 8. compared with Acts i. 16—20. and hence that Psalm is called the *Iscariotic* Psalm. See John xviii. 2.

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another

Doth not the Reader feel a certain somewhat like relief in his mind, from this blessed and divine discourse of JESUS, after going over the awful subject of the traitor's character? No sooner was *Judas* gone out, than JESUS said, *Now is the* SON *of Man glorified, and* GOD *is glorified in him.* Yes! when the traitor was departed, there remained none with CHRIST but his family, his children, his mystical body. In these the LORD was glorified, and *they* made everlastingly happy in him. Yea, all the persons of the GODHEAD were glorified in the same. And I pray the Reader not to overlook in this contemplation of CHRIST, and his Church, that the whole Church is to be considered in this. For the eleven Apostles were at that time the representatives of CHRIST's whole body the Church. And as such, when *Judas* was gone out, who represented the devil and his whole family, JESUS and his family were left alone, and hence CHRIST's glory. Reader! so will it be in that great day, when sin, and Satan, and all the seed of the serpent in the *Judas* of every generation, shall be gone out for ever! How do the faithful now enjoy themselves in the LORD, when at times two or three are met together in his name, and JESUS in the midst of them, and for a while they are uninterrupted by the ungodly? And what a glorious day of GOD will that be, when *the Zion of* GOD, as one of the Psalms blessedly sings of it, shall be brought home, and *the rod of the wicked* shall no longer fall, much less *rest upon the lot of the righteous. As for such,* saith that sweet Psalm, *as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the* LORD *shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.* PSM. CXXV.

36 ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

For the observations on the fall of *Peter,* and the LORD's recovery of him by his grace. See Luke xxii. 31. and the Commentary.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not close your view of this most blessed Chapter, which unfolds so sweetly the heart of CHRIST to his people, and shews them that his whole heart towards them is love, before that you have begged also of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath given the

Church such a view of that love, that the LORD will cause all the gracious streams of it to flow from CHRIST's heart into ours. Can the imagination form to itself any thing more lovely, than thus to behold CHRIST encircled with his family, and forgetting his own personal concerns in the tremendous exercises both of soul and body the LORD had then to go through, and now opening before him, but yet in the midst of all, washing his disciples feet? Was there ever an instance of the kind heard of among the histories of the world for a Master to act thus towards his Servants? And here it was the LORD of heaven and earth performing the service to poor sinners? *Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, for the* LORD *hath done it!*

But, dearest JESUS! wilt thou not in some measure, (as far as our poor short-sighted capacities can have any suitable apprehension of thy gracious design,) wilt thou not shew us of thy meaning? Was it as a parting act to say, when I am gone, as no opportunity can then occur of demonstrating by any such an *outward* act towards you, of what my *inward* affections are; I hereby shew you that I think no condescension too great to serve and bless my people? If I have washed your feet upon earth, fear not but that I will wash your souls from sin when I am in heaven. And though I am now going to my FATHER, and for a while ye will see me no more, let this shew you, that though my state is changed, yet not my nature. There, as well as here, I am the same JESUS. And though I am going to my FATHER, and to my redeemed gone before, nothing will lessen or remove my affection for my redeemed below. As oft as my Church calls to remembrance this act of mine, in washing my poor disciples' feet, let such a love-token become, as among other designs which I have had in view in the doing it. I intended a palpable proof, that *having loved my own which are in the world, I love them to the end!* Precious LORD JESUS! may not thy redeemed venture to form such conclusions from this gracious act of thine, as if JESUS thus opened to us his heart. Think often of this, I pray the Reader, yea, the whole Church of God. May my poor soul think of nothing beside! And, oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST, the sweet Remembrancer of JESUS, may keep the thought warm in my heart, until the cold clay hand of death come upon me, and my soul escape from the prison of the body to enjoy the fruition of it for ever.

And, oh! my honored LORD! let even the awful view of the traitor *Judas*, make my mercies infinitely more and more precious, from learning therefrom how distinguishing they are. LORD! it is all thy grace, it is all thy rich, free, sovereign mercy. Be it my daily delight to receive the whole, and every part of thy Church's peace and safety, and happiness, to covenant love; and to ascribe the whole to the united grace of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

The LORD *is here comforting his Disciples, to prepare their Minds against the Time of his Departure. He describes the Person, Work, and Grace, of the* HOLY GHOST.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest: and how can we know the way?

6 ¶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

It hath been a matter of question, and indeed it cannot be determined with such certainty as to leave the matter without question, at what time or place the LORD JESUS delivered this precious discourse. I do not presume to speak on this, or indeed any other point with decision, but I venture to believe that the whole of our LORD's discourse in this and the two following Chapters, was delivered after or partly at the time of his instituting his holy Supper. This chapter, perhaps at the table, and at the close of this chapter, JESUS said, *Arise, let us go hence,* it is probable that then they all arose from the table, and went toward the garden of *Gethsemane.* And as they went, the LORD still continuing his discourse, as contained in the two following chapters. And as his custom was to avail himself of any surrounding circumstances to raise improvement from, and beholding the luxuriancy of the vines, which in warm countries like *Judæa* run over the hedges, and along the ground; the LORD took occasion to compare himself to a vine, and his people to the branches, as the opening of the next chapter begins with. See Chapter xv. But I conceive that both the following chapters, and the prayer which follows in the xviith chapter, were all delivered before the LORD and his disciples arrived at the garden of *Gethsemane.* For the Reader may notice that the xviiith. Chapter begins in this manner: *When* JESUS *had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples.* John xviii. 1. Whether the hymn which is said to have been sung by them, was before or after this Chapter, I presume not to say; but it appears to me, that this was the order of the LORD's discourse in

those Chapters, and his divine prayer which followed, but I do not determine upon it. Matt. xxvi. 30.

To enter into the subject of this discourse of the LORD JESUS, would require many volumes, and after all numberless beauties would still remain unnoticed. I shall rather therefore recommend it both to myself and Reader to look to GOD the HOLY GHOST for his sweet teaching, through the several parts of it, to unfold and explain the whole to our hearts while we sit at the feet of JESUS, and hear those gracious words which proceeded from his mouth. John vi. 63.

If the Reader will have in remembrance the season when JESUS delivered this discourse as he goes through it, the recollection will tend to endear yet more every portion of it to his heart. The LORD was now in the moment of departure. This was the last quiet and uninterrupted meeting he knew that he should ever enjoy with his few faithful disciples before his sufferings and death. And if I am right in my conjectures, that this discourse and prayer which followed was after the institution of his Supper, the traitor was then gone out. As a dying father therefore in the midst of his family, and standing now upon the threshold of the eternal world, with his mind full of those glories opening before him, he addresses his disciples in those soul-comforting words, *Let not your heart be troubled!* And as an everlasting support that they should not be troubled, he begins his discourse, and takes it as a text for his whole sermon; the eternal nature of his GODHEAD in his oneness and equality with GOD; and reminds them that he is with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, the equal object of faith; and therefore enjoins their belief in GOD and in Him, as the grand and sure security for comfort against all the sorrows and temptations of life. *Ye believe in* GOD, that is, in his threefold character of persons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, as GOD in covenant; *believe also in me*, that is, as GOD-Man-Mediator. Which interpretation of the passage, I humbly conceive to be in exact agreement with our LORD's prayer, which immediately followed this sermon, when he said, *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true* GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST, *whom thou hast sent.* John xvii. 3.

And, Reader! do not fail to observe with what tenderness the LORD speaks to his disciples concerning those sure mansions of glory which he was going to take possession of in their name. He had, and not long before, washed their feet, to convince them both of his condescending love, and that by such an act while he was with them, they might be convinced that there was nothing but what he would do for them when he was gone from them into heaven, and incapable of shewing by such outward tokens how much he loved them. And now he repeats in the tenderest form of words every assurance of his unalterable affection. I pray the Reader, before he goes further, to gather into one point of view the several very endearing expressions of the LORD JESUS on this one point, as they are interspersed here and there in this our LORD's discourse.

First, He assures them of his unceasing love for them, and proposeth himself in common with GOD, to be the great object of their faith and love after his departure. Verse 1. *Secondly*, He gives them the most absolute assurance of his unalterable regard for them. Yea, to convince them of this, he declares that their very life is bound up

in his, and *because he lives, they shall live also,* ver. 19. *Thirdly,* He tells them that it is for them, and for their everlasting welfare, for which he goes away. Their interest, as well as his glory, was concerned in his departure. *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* John xvi. 7. The Reader will observe, that I do but just glance at those precious things in the LORD's discourse. To enlarge on them, as I pray the LORD the HOLY GHOST to do, in his opening them both to the Reader's mind and my own, would far exceed the limits of any Commentary but GOD the SPIRIT's. *Fourthly.* The LORD declares, that when he had dispatched the great concerns on their account, for which he was about to leave them, and return to glory, and had sent the HOLY GHOST to them, and prepared all things for their reception, *he would come again and receive them unto himself, that where he was, there they should be also.* Reader! pause here. Would it not have been enough in our LORD, and as a proof of his love, had he said, I am going away on your account, and when I have prepared and made every thing ready for you, I will send my angels to fetch you, and bring you home to me? No! Our dear LORD, by what he hath here said, hath declared that this would not have been enough in his esteem. I will come myself, said the blessed Redeemer. *I will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* Oh! matchless love of a glorious lover! The Reader should be told, in order that he may enter yet further into the heartfelt enjoyment of those precious words of JESUS, that it was the custom with the Jews in their marriages, when all things were prepared and made ready for the reception of the bride, the husband goes himself to his bride's house to fetch her home to his own, and trusts not this embassy to any other person. JESUS, therefore, our bridegroom, will not be out-done in acts of love to his spouse, but in the marriage his FATHER hath made for his SON with his Church, will himself come and bring her home to *the marriage supper of the lamb.* Rev. xix. 6, 9. *Fifthly.* The LORD assures them yet further, that though absent in body, he will be present with them in spirit. *I will not leave you comfortless,* (or as the margin of the Bible renders the word, *orphans.* John xvi. 18.) *I will come to you.* Yea, he added, that the FATHER also would come, *and we* (said JESUS,) *will make our abode with you.* And *the* HOLY GHOST *shall abide with you for ever.* Verses 23, 26. So that, however to outward appearance the LORD was gone from them into heaven, yet in reality he was *always with them, even unto the end of the world.* Matt. xxviii. 20. Isaiah xxvii. 3. *Sixthly.* And JESUS, as if to endear himself yet more to them, and to convince them that his whole heart and soul was their's, (Jer. xxxii. 41.) desires them to be continually sending to him their wishes and prayers, that he might present them to his and their FATHER. And he assures them, that *whatsoever they should ask the* FATHER *in his name he would do it for them, that the* FATHER *might be glorified in the* SON, verse 13. Yea, the LORD seems to be gently reproving them of a backwardness in those applications in times past; and therefore now bids them be the more bold, as He will be with the FATHER, when their petitions come before the throne. *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name,* (that

is, in comparison to what you might, and as you shall, when GOD the HOLY GHOST is come upon you to teach you how to pray, and what to pray for,) *ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* John xvi. 24. *Seventhly.* JESUS not only promiseth to send the HOLY GHOST to them immediately on his departure, and which he assured them was one great cause wherefore he went away, but he gives them to understand, that in having Him, the SPIRIT, they would in fact have CHRIST, for his great office would be to glorify CHRIST. And so much of union and design there was in all that belonged to the HOLY GHOST, in teaching of JESUS that that blessed SPIRIT was in one and the same moment an Almighty LORD in his own eternal power and GODHEAD, the promise of the FATHER, and the effect of CHRIST's ascension, so that every one hath the mind of CHRIST that was under the influences of the HOLY GHOST. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Luke xxiv. 49. 1 Cor. ii. 16. And *Eighthly* and *Lastly*, to mention no more. The LORD JESUS assured them that GOD the HOLY GHOST would not do as He was now about to do from the necessity of the measure, leave them when once he came, and which would be soon after CHRIST was gone from them, for he would soon come, but he would abide with them for ever, and never for a moment depart from them, until JESUS himself came in person to take them home, where they should then dwell with him, and part no more. These, and many more sweet assurances to the same purport, the LORD JESUS delivered to them in this parting discourse, to convince them of his unalterable affection. And, in confirmation of the whole, in their hearing, and before he went into the garden of *Gethsemane*, as soon as he had finished his discourse he followed the subject up with prayer, and solemnly committed them into the FATHER's hands with his whole Church and people. See John xvii.

After so long a page of contents (for they are but contents,) as I have given, in reciting *some* of the many interesting heads of our LORD's discourse, I shall not trespass further in dwelling on our LORD's answer to *Thomas*, than just to observe, that CHRIST is not only the way, as pointing to it, teaching of it, and going before in it, but is Himself the *way*, in being the whole of it in his person, works, offices, characters, and relations. His obedience and death constitute the way, for there is no other. He is the *truth*, for he is truth itself, in whom JEHOVAH centers the whole of all grace and all glory; *the Amen, the faithful and true witness.* Isa. lxv. 16. Rev. iii. 14. Ephes. i. 10. And He is the life and light of the whole creation of GOD, in all the departments of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. John i. 4. Ephes. i. 3. John iii. 36. 1 John i. 1, 2.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me, that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me, for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater *works* than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

The Church hath great reason to bless the LORD for so sweetly answering *Philip's* question, and thereby removing all doubts on the great subject of CHRIST's oneness with the FATHER. Oh! what a flood of light hath the LORD in this one verse, and by this one declaration, thrown upon it, when JESUS said, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the* FATHER. Blessed oneness indeed! Not only one with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, in the essence of the GODHEAD, but one in the nature, purpose, and design of all the grand causes for which the SON of GOD took into union with himself the holy portion of manhood, and became GOD-Man-Mediator. So that in seeing CHRIST, as CHRIST, the believer sees GOD in all his perfections, attributes, graces, love, and the purposes of his will and pleasure, in every thing relating to the Church before the foundation of the world, in the whole time-state of existence, and the eternity to follow. CHRIST is seen, when properly seen by the enlightened eye of the renewed mind, as the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, 1 Cor. i. 24. yea, the manifold wisdom of GOD. Ephes. iii. 9, 10. Coloss. ii. 3. the holiness of GOD, and the justice of GOD, Rom. iii. 25. the love of GOD, and the faithfulness of GOD, 1 John iv. 9, 10. Deut. vii. 9. 1 John i. 9. In short, all that is communicable of GOD and his glory, can only be seen, and is seen in the face of JESUS CHRIST. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Reader! do not pass away from this most interesting of all subjects, before that you have first enquired at your own heart, whether *you* yourself have so seen CHRIST? Every child of GOD, truly regenerated, can have no other views of CHRIST. *Paul*, for himself, saith, that *when it pleased* GOD, *who separated him from his mother's womb to call him by his grace, he revealed his* SON (said Paul) *in me*. Gal. i 15, 16. And it must be the same in a greater or less degree in all.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

We here enter upon the great subject of our LORD's Sermon, in what JESUS hath been pleased to teach his Church in relation to the person and glory of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And as the whole efficient government and blessings of the Church are in the hands of this Almighty LORD, we never can be too thankful to our dear LORD, for having dwelt so largely as he hath done, in this and the two following Chapters, (which are but a continuation of the same Sermon,) in instructing the Church concerning his person and ministry. The Reader will perceive by what the LORD JESUS hath said of his coming, and the FATHER's coming, and the HOLY GHOST's coming, and abiding for ever with his people, within the compass of those few verses, (see 16—21.) how needful it must be to have a proper apprehension of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his person and character. And I hope that he will not complain of my dwelling too particularly on the subject, while I aim to bring before him scriptural testimonies in proof.

That GOD the HOLY GHOST is a person in the GODHEAD, is a truth to which the whole body of Scripture bears evidence. Indeed it were hardly necessary to go further than to what those words of JESUS afford in confirmation. CHRIST calls him *another* Comforter; consequently a distinct person from JESUS. And as he was to be sent by the FATHER, consequently also a distinct person from the FATHER, verse 26. In both Testaments of Scripture, the personality of GOD the HOLY GHOST is fully proved. He was *seen* in a bodily shape, like a dove, at the baptism of CHRIST. Luke iii. 22. And there was a visible representation of Him also on the day of Pentecost, when, according to JESUS's promise of Him, he baptized CHRIST's disciples. Acts i. 5. compared with Acts ii. 3. Many times under both dispensations of Scripture, the Old Testament, and the New, the LORD the HOLY GHOST was heard to *speak*. Compare Isaiah vi. 8, 9, 10. with Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27. Probably the voice which *Daniel* heard on the banks of *Ulai* might be GOD the HOLY GHOST. Dan. viii. 16. But whether in this instance or not, we are expressly told, that it was the SPIRIT in the Prophets, when they spake *of the sufferings of* CHRIST, *and of the glory which should follow*. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. And *the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of* GOD *spake as they were moved by the* HOLY GHOST. 2 Pet. i. 21. And we are further told, that when *Philip* was sent into the desert to preach to the Æthiopian; the SPIRIT spake to him, and said, *Go near and join thyself to this chariot*. Acts viii. 29. So again the SPIRIT spake to *Peter: behold three men seek thee*. Acts x. 19. So again, while the Church at *Antioch* were waiting upon the LORD, the HOLY GHOST said; *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*. Acts xiii. 2. Surely these are all personal acts, and which as clearly and fully prove Personal Identity, as the existence and actions of a man demonstrate the reality of the being and nature of a man.

Indeed in addition to those testimonies, by which the certainty of Person is definable; in relation to GOD the HOLY GHOST on this point, it should be further observed, that the *qualities* ascribed to him, and the *affections* he is spoken of as exercising; come in proof, to put the matter beyond all doubt. Both *actively*, and *passively*, such things are said of him as could never be said but on the certain ground of his being a Person. He is said to *create and give life, to uphold, and to*

destroy. Job xxxiii. 4. Psm. civ. 29, 30. He is promised by JESUS, to act as a *teacher*; as a *witness, and to testify of Him.* John xiv. 26. Rom. ix. 1. John xv. 26. And all the affections of joy and grief, of mind, and will, and power; such as being *tempted, resisted,* having *despite done unto him,* and being *blasphemed*; these are all expressly spoken of in reference to the Person of the HOLY GHOST, and what higher proofs can be desired in confirmation of his Personality? Ephes. iv. 30. Rom. viii. 27. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Rom. xv. 13. Acts v. 9. vii. 51. Heb. x. 29. Mark iii. 29. If the Reader considers the subject in the important point of view in which it ought to be considered, he will think with me, that too great a stress, and especially in an age like the present, cannot be laid upon this momentous article of the faith, of every true believer. The Person of GOD the HOLY GHOST is with many scarcely ever considered; and with many more, denied. And yet nothing is more plain in Scripture, than that the LORD the SPIRIT is a Person, equal in every point of view, with the FATHER and the SON, in glory, in dignity, and in every divine perfection: and no less equal in acts of love, and grace, towards the Church. Reader! is it not then our highest concern to give the LORD the honor due unto his name; and daily, hourly to hear what *the* SPIRIT *who speaketh expressly, saith unto the Churches?* 1 Tim. iv. 1. Rev. ii. 29.

From the clear conviction of the Personality of GOD the HOLY GHOST, our next enquiry must be in relation to his *eternal power and* GODHEAD. Having fully shewn, that He is a Being, defined by personal properties; it must follow, that he is GOD: One with the FATHER and the SON in the essence of GODHEAD, over all, GOD blessed for ever. A few of the more prominent Scriptures on this point, will abundantly explain and confirm this doctrine. The several *names* by which the HOLY GHOST is distinguished in Scripture, and which he possesseth in common with the FATHER and the SON, are very high proofs. He is called the *Eternal* SPIRIT; in express reference to himself. Heb. ix. 14. And the name of GOD, is not only his, as One of the Persons in the GODHEAD, Isaiah xl. 28. John iv. 24; but with special regard to the HOLY GHOST, he that is called the HOLY GHOST in one verse, is in the following declared to be GOD. Acts v. 3, 4. *Moses* declared that it was JEHOVAH alone, which led Israel in the wilderness. Deut. xxxii. 12. *Isaiah* confirms the same truth, and saith, that it was *the* HOLY SPIRIT *which led the people with his glorious arm.* Isaiah lxiii. 10. The people are said to have tempted the LORD at the waters of *Meribah.* But the Apostle explains this in reference to the HOLY GHOST. Compare Exod. xvii. 2. with Heb. iii. 7, 8, 9. JEHOVAH declared concerning prophecy, that *if there was a prophet among the people, I, the* LORD, (said JEHOVAH) *will make myself known unto him in a vision.* But an Apostle explains this, and refers the whole gifts of prophecy into the immediate agency of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Compare Numb xii. 6. with 2 Pet. i. 21. Are not these decisive evidences in proof?

To the *names* by which the HOLY GHOST is declared to be GOD, must be added, the *attributes* and *perfections* which confirm the same: every one of which is discoverable as being His, in common with the FATHER and the SON. The *Power* of JEHOVAH is manifested in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. And hence

while we are told, that *it is* GOD *which worketh in his people, both to will and to do of his good pleasure,* we are as expressly told, that it is *the* SPIRIT *which worketh in them, and divideth to every man severally as he will.* Compare Philip. ii. 13. with 1 Cor. xii. 6. 11. The same holds good in the exercise of every other attribute. The LORD'S unceasing and everlasting *Presence.* Psm. CXXXIX. 1, 2. *Wisdom.* Jude 25. Isaiah xi. 2. Ephes. i. 17. Life-giving, Soul-renewing, *Strength.* Job xxxiii. 14. John vi. 63. Ephes. ii. 1. Rom. viii. 11. In short, there is not one perfection of JEHOVAH definable of GODHEAD, but what we find in Scripture, ascribed to the HOLY GHOST.

And what tends yet further to the confirmation of the doctrine, and must, if properly considered, for ever silence every doubt, is this, that the HOLY GHOST is spoken of as possessing and exercising those Almighty Perfections in the same acts as the FATHER and the SON. The FATHER is said *to have life in himself.* John v. 26. The SON is said to be *the life and light of men.* John i. 4. And the HOLY GHOST is said *to give life.* 2 Cor. iii. 6. Psm. civ. 29, 30. And, as in time, so in eternity; for while eternal life is said *to be the gift of* GOD *the* FATHER, Rom. vi. 23. eternal life is said *to be in the* SON, 1 John v. 11. and another scripture saith, that it is *of the* SPIRIT, believers in CHRIST *shall reap life everlasting.* Gal. vi. 8. And what is the natural and unavoidable result of these and the like testimonies, but what the same holy scripture hath elsewhere declared, that *there are Three that bear record in heaven, the* FATHER, *the* WORD, *and the* HOLY GHOST, *and these Three are One.* 1 John v. 7. Hence all the blessed consequences which follow. The Church is *baptized* into the joint name of the HOLY THREE in One. Matt. xxviii. 19. The Church is blessed in their joint name. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. *Redemption* equally ascribed. 2 Cor. v. 19. Ephes. i. 7. Heb. ix. 14. Ephes. v. 30. *Justified.* Rom. viii. 33. Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Sanctified.* Jude 1. Heb. xiii. 12. 2 Thess. ii. 13. And the *glory* to which the Church will be ultimately brought, the result of the whole. Ephes. i. 4. 2 Cor. viii. 23. 2 Pet. i. 1—4.

From all these undeniable testimonies in confirmation of the *person* and GODHEAD of the HOLY GHOST, may be added the special and personal office of His, in *the everlasting covenant,* which tends to endear him to the Church, in equal degrees of affection, in common with the FATHER and the SON, as well as to entitle Him to an equal degree of adoration, love, obedience, and praise, to all eternity. I need not in this place dwell upon those several *covenant offices* which peculiarly mark the character of GOD the HOLY GHOST, some of which JESUS hath noted in this Sermon, and will meet us in their proper place. I am now simply endeavouring to establish, from scriptural proofs, the certainty of his person and GODHEAD. And therefore I shall only for the present observe, that the Personal act of the HOLY GHOST, in the great work of the regeneration of the Church, becomes an equal demonstration of love, and power, with those of the FATHER'S choice of the Church, in giving the Church to his dear SON: and the SON'S taking into union with himself his Church, redeeming her, when in the time-state of her being, she had fallen into sin, and became justly exposed to divine wrath. Until this act of regeneration is wrought, the child of GOD is unconscious of his high birth, and

character. He knows nothing of the FATHER's love, or the SON's grace, respecting the purposes of JEHOVAH towards the Church from all eternity. And although that everlasting love of GOD, like the river spoken of Psalm xlvi. 3, had been always running; and in the Person of CHRIST had passed through his very heart, in love to his people: yet the whole was hidden from every individual of the Church, until by regeneration, the sinner *dead in trespasses and sins* had his eyes opened, to behold *the fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.* Then, and not before, *the streams of that river* are discovered, *which make glad the city of* GOD. Ephes. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus i. 2. Jude 1. Titus iii. 4, 5. Zech xiii. 1.

The several sweet and blessed office characters of the HOLY GHOST, which JESUS hath noticed in this Chapter, I postpone the consideration of, to the succeeding Chapters. Enough, I hope, hath been advanced in this, and from scriptural authority, to establish the certainty of His Person, GODHEAD, and the part he hath in the everlasting Covenant. Here for the present I rest, to attend to a few other points contained in this Chapter, which must not be wholly passed by. See Chapters xv. xxvi. xxvii.

I beg the Reader to notice, what the LORD JESUS hath here said, in respect to his coming to them again, after his departure. He promised that he would not leave them comfortless, or as *Orphans.* And though the HOLY GHOST would come, and abide with them for ever, yet this should not supersede his visits. Reader! do not lose sight of this, for it is very blessed. See Song ii. 10, &c. Rev. iii. 20.

And I beg the Reader to notice no less, what a sweet promise follows, in what JESUS hath said, that while men of the world who on his departure would see him no more, his people his redeemed should have a spiritual apprehension of his everlasting presence. *Because I live ye shall live also.* Not only in his eternal nature and GODHEAD doth the SON of GOD live, but as GOD-MAN-Mediator, and as such is the life of his people: for they, as members of his body, live *in* him, and live *from* him, and live *upon* him, and live *to* him. All the springs of spiritual life are in Him. All the springs of eternal life are in Him also. Yea, said JESUS, as if to intimate somewhat more; *At that day,* meaning that day when the HOLY GHOST should come upon them and open to their minds the clearer apprehension of these things; *ye shall know, that I am in my* FATHER, *and ye in me, and I in you.* What words are here! Who shall undertake to explain the full extent of the oneness and union which they express? Those unions between the FATHER and the SON, and between CHRIST as CHRIST (that is, GOD and Man in one Person) and his people, had been from everlasting. But in that day, (saith CHRIST,) when the HOLY GHOST shall more fully open to your view my Person and Glory; ye shall know it. Reader! ponder well the subject. Oh! that the LORD the HOLY GHOST may unfold the blessedness of it, more and more, to my heart.

I beg the Reader not to overlook with what tenderness GOD the HOLY GHOST hath mentioned the name of his faithful servant *Judas,* (or *Jude*), that he might not for a moment be mistaken for the traitor. *Not Iscariot!* It is in my esteem a very great mark of the love and regard of the HOLY GHOST to his people.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

I should not think it necessary to pause over what our LORD hath said in relation to himself and the FATHER, had it not been sometimes perverted, and applied in a way, in which CHRIST never intended the expression. When JESUS saith, *My* FATHER *is greater than I;* he could not mean in respect to his *divine* nature: for the One glorious Essence of JEHOVAH is possessed in common with the whole Persons of the GODHEAD; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST: and the whole are equally great and glorious. Neither in the Personal nature of the GODHEAD could the words be meant. For both the FATHER and the SON are here also equal. And although the FATHER be called by the Church, and by way of distinction from the SON and the HOLY GHOST, the *first* in point of order; yet this is never understood, neither is it ever meant, by way of precedency. GOD the FATHER had not being before the SON and HOLY GHOST: neither though called FATHER in a way of distinction, is it meant to intimate as if he was the cause of the SON's being; both being in their nature and essence eternal. Equal in the eternity of Being, in dignity, power, and glory: and the whole Three Persons possessing in common every attribute which constitutes the GODHEAD. So that under these distinctions of Person and character in relation to the GODHEAD, JESUS could not have reference when speaking of the superiority of his FATHER. But in respect to his Covenant Office, as GOD-MAN-MEDIATOR; no question for a moment can be entertained, but what the SON of GOD hath condescended to act in a subordinate character. Hence he is called JEHOVAH's servant: and the Surety of his Church and People. And in all the departments of those offices, every thing manifested that his FATHER was greater than he. For while CHRIST was subjected to all the indignities and sorrows of his Mediator nature and character, GOD the FATHER lost nothing of his original honor and felicity. The comparison therefore, is not made in relation to the *nature* of both in the GODHEAD, for that must be unalterable and impossible to admit of increase or lessening. But the whole refers to the *office-character* which each Person entered into, and engaged for, in the Covenant. And here JESUS might truly say, as he did in this verse; *My* FATHER *is greater than I!*

REFLECTIONS.

ALMIGHTY Preacher! give me grace to set at thy feet and hear by faith thy sweet and all-powerful voice in this unequalled sermon of thine, causing all the gracious truths of it to sink deep in my heart. Yes! thou dearest LORD! thou art indeed *the way, and the truth, and the life.* None can have access to GOD but by thee. GOD hath set thee up in thy Mediator-character. And in thee, and by thee, as the life and the light of thy people, thy whole Church hath access by one SPIRIT to the FATHER.

Welcome HOLY and Eternal GOD the SPIRIT, to thy Church! Thou art indeed the very Comforter: for LORD thy great work is consolation. Oh! give me to know thee in thy sweet manifestations, in comforting my poor soul under all discouragements, with the suitableness of CHRIST. Yea, LORD, in all thy gifts and graces, make known to me the glory, the grace, the love, the infinite tenderness, and compassion, of my GOD and SAVIOR, in taking of the things of CHRIST, and shewing them to me. Be it my unceasing happiness, to be brought daily, hourly, under thy quickening, refreshing, soul-reviving influences, that I may be filled with that *joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.*

FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all grace! blessed, for ever blessed, be that everlasting love, which hath followed up the manifestation of GOD's dear SON, in the manifestation of GOD's holy SPIRIT. *Thanks be unto* GOD *for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

The LORD *continues his Discourse through the whole of this Chapter. Under the Similitude of a Vine and the Branches,* JESUS *describes his Union with his Church. In the close of the Chapter,* JESUS *again speaks of the coming of the* HOLY GHOST.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth

forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Nothing can be more beautiful in the illustration of that sweet and precious doctrine, of the oneness and union of CHRIST with his Church, than the figure of the Vine and its Branches, which the LORD JESUS hath here been pleased to explain it by. He is indeed the One true Vine, and as the Prophet calls him, the *Branch;* to which the Evangelist, under the same authority, gives testimony when saying: the *Branch* (for so it should have been rendered, and so it is indeed in the margin of our old Bibles,) *from on high hath visited us.* Luke i. 78. See Isaiah xi. 1. Jerem. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8.—vi. 12. And it is a very blessed part in this figure, wherein JESUS speaks of his FATHER, under the character of the Husbandman. For all CHRIST is, as CHRIST, is of JEHOVAH. Hence the Prophet, speaking of the *sufferings* of CHRIST, under this similitude, saith; *And the Branch that thou madest so strong for thyself, it is burnt with fire and cut down.* Psm. lxxx. 15, 16. And another servant of the LORD, when speaking under the same spirit of prophecy, in relation to the *glories* of CHRIST, saith: *In that day the Branch of the* LORD *shall be beautiful and glorious.* Isaiah iv. 2. It hath been supposed, that in the memorable prophecy of the dying Patriarch *Jacob,* the *Vine* unto which the foal he said should be bound; referred to the same. And when it be considered what went before in the Patriarch's prophecy of the *Shiloh,* to whom the gathering of the people should be, there seems a great connection with the whole. Gen. xlix. 10, 11. Matt. xxi. 2, 7. I do not think it necessary to dwell upon the several characters of a Vine and its branches, by way of illustrating the doctrine, concerning the union and communion between CHRIST and his people. Every way by which the dependance of the Church is shewn to be wholly on CHRIST; a branch on a Vine strikingly displays. It springs from the Vine, derives all its life, sap, moisture, fruitfulness, wholly from the Vine. And JESUS is all this, and infinitely more, to his people. In his *divine nature,* deep rooted in his own self-existence, in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST. In his *human nature,* the Branch of growth arising from the root of Jesse. And in *both,* the source of all fruitfulness, to the Church, in time, and to all eternity. Hail! thou LORD of *Joseph, the fruitful bough, whose branches run over the wall!* Gen. xlix. 22.

I detain the Reader to remark to him, that the *second* verse should be read, as the original will truly allow; *Every branch that beareth not*

fruit in me. For there can be no Branch, really, and truly in CHRIST, but what must bear fruit. But there may be many, that appear as branches in the LORD's garden the Church; and yet have no union with him. So that what fruit soever they bear, it is not in CHRIST, neither from CHRIST; and therefore their root is in themselves, and shall be, as *rottenness, and their blossom go up as the dust.* Isaiah v. 24. Deut. xxxii. 32. Whereas the true branches, in the true Vine, derive all *from* the Vine. Every portion of life, and fruitfulness, come from CHRIST. *From me* (the LORD saith,) *is thy fruit found.* Hosea xiv. 8. Reader! be very jealous over your own heart, on these grand points. See to it, that not only in the first grafting upon CHRIST, when taken from the old olive tree, which is wild by nature, thou art grafted contrary to nature, (being wholly an act of free sovereign grace in GOD, and nothing of man concurring with it,) into this true Olive Tree, CHRIST JESUS; but in all the after actings of life, see to it that it is all upon CHRIST, and all from CHRIST. Grace is no self acting principle. All our fresh springs are in Him. *Of his fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace;* meaning, that we need daily, yea momently, grace from JESUS, to act upon and keep alive, the grace we have before had from JESUS. CHRIST is all. Rom. xi. 24. Psm. lxxxvii. 7. John i. 16.

I detain the Reader one moment longer to remark, respecting what our LORD saith; *Abide in me, and I in you.* I humbly apprehend, that this is not a mere precept of CHRIST, but rather a promise. JESUS meant by the expression to say, that by his HOLY SPIRIT, which he was going from them purposely to send, they should be enabled to abide in him. The words, according to my view, are similar to that sweet scripture of CHRIST, when JESUS *breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the* HOLY GHOST. John xx. 22. This was no precept: commanding them to receive what they had no power to take hold of, without the LORD making them receivers, of what he communicated. In like manner here. *Abide in me.* JESUS undertakes for them, that they shall abide in him. *And I in you.* How, but from his own sole grace, could they receive this abiding of CHRIST in them? But if the LORD JESUS with the precept, wills them into the apprehension of the blessing; and while he thus speaks, communicates the power to receive, and enjoy: how very blessed are our LORD's words read in this sense? Ye *shall* abide in me; and I *will* abide in you. And all this is in perfect conformity to our LORD's own everlasting Covenant with his people; in which he hath undertaken, both for himself, and for them. *And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them; that I will not turn away from them to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Jerem. xxxii. 40. Here we behold the security. The LORD engageth (and well it is that he doth) for both. I *will* not, saith the LORD, and they *shall* not. I leave the Reader to his own conclusions, under GOD the HOLY GHOST's teaching, on this subject. But I venture to observe, that there are numberless portions in the word of GOD, which in their first view, however they may seemingly appear as precepts; yet, explained upon Gospel principles, will be found more in the sweet language of promises, and such as tend to refresh, rather than alarm the soul, in a conscious inability of performance. See Matt. v. 48. 1 Pet. i. 15.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord: if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass,* that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Some of the many blessed things here spoken of by our LORD, are so sweet and plain, as to need no comment: indeed their beautiful simplicity, would suffer by one. I shall only therefore venture to offer an observation or two, which may not at first view appear so obvious as others.

When our LORD saith, in the opening of this passage, that as the FATHER hath loved him, so hath CHRIST loved his Church: it is very proper that we should consider, in what sense JESUS meant it. The love here spoken of in relation to the FATHER's affection towards JESUS, cannot be supposed to be the love he bears to the SON, as GOD. For in this sense, none but GOD himself, can apprehend the nature or extent of it. We must be blessed with infinite capacities, before that we can have the smallest conceptions, concerning any one thing, that is in its nature infinite. This, therefore, is not the love to which JESUS refers. Neither is it to be supposed, that the FATHER's love of CHRIST, in the Personal glory of GOD-Man-Mediator, as CHRIST, is the love here meant. This must far exceed CHRIST's love of the Church. But the sense seems to be, that the love JESUS here speaks of, in relation to his Church, is of *the same nature and kind,* though not in equal degree. Under these limitations, and with an eye to CHRIST, as the predisposing cause, in whom, and for whose sake, GOD the FATHER loved the Church before all worlds, and chose the Church in CHRIST before all worlds; there is nothing upon earth can be more blessed, than the assurance JESUS hath here given: both of his FATHER's love of Him, and his love of the Church in Him. It is blessed, yea very blessed, to ponder the subject in this point of view! JESUS desires the Church to keep always in remembrance, that as the FATHER loveth Him, in this precious view, as the Head of his body the Church, and as such CHRIST hath been from everlasting infinitely delightful in his sight: so, saith JESUS, is my Church dear to me, as my FATHER's gift, and as the several members of my mystical body. Reader! fold up in your bosom those precious words of JESUS, for your unceasing meditation and delight!

I beg the Reader next to notice, what JESUS hath said, in respect to *the keeping his commandments, by way of abiding in his love.* Not, as if the love of JESUS was suspended on any act of his people: for this would be to subvert the whole plan of the Gospel; and to make the grace of GOD to depend upon the free will of man. In this case, human merit, and not divine favor, would become the standard of acceptance. Reader! I hope that you have not so learned CHRIST! CHRIST's love, is the sole cause of ours. And as we never obtained that love, because we kept his commandments: so our continuing in that love doth not rest, or depend upon, our present or future deservings, more than our past or original merit. The word *If,* in the beginning of the verse, *if ye keep my commandments,* seem to be used by CHRIST in a similar way and manner to the words of his servant the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews: not as forming a *cause,* or *condition,* but rather as the *consequence.* For speaking of CHRIST and his house, he saith, *whose house are we,* if *we hold fast the confidence.* Heb. iii. 6. So again, verse 14, *We are made partakers of* CHRIST (saith he) *if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.* In both those instances, it is our mercy, that neither our being of the house of CHRIST, built on Him the foundation, nor our being made partakers of CHRIST as part of himself; depend upon the least act of ours. These things were all settled before the foundation of the world; being chosen in Him, that we should be holy, and without blame, before GOD and our FATHER in love. Ephes. i. 4. But the Apostle in both places is speaking of the *result* of things, and not the *cause,* or *condition* of them; but as of a thing actually enjoyed. It is, as if he had said, we manifestly prove that we are CHRIST's, because we remain on the foundation: and we shew to all the world, that we are made partakers of CHRIST, because the sweet fruits of his grace, and love, are manifested in our lives, and conversation. In like manner, the keeping CHRIST's commandments are not meant as the cause, of abiding in his love; but his love is the cause, how his people are enabled to keep his commandments, and abide in him: and these become so many proofs and evidences that they are His, and who continue in his love.

I hope the Reader can, and doth, enter with me, into a suitable apprehension of the sweet character, JESUS makes use of, as a friend. JESUS is indeed *the friend that loveth at all times, and one that sticketh closer than a brother.* Prov. xvii. 17.—xviii. 24. And who that considers, how from everlasting, JESUS engaged for his Church, as a surety; how he died for us; paid all our debts for us; bought us out of the hands of infinite justice; married our nature; is gone to heaven, to take possession of it in our name; will come again to receive us to himself, that where he is, we may be also: and in the mean time, supplies all our wants, answers all our necessities; and in every circumstance of life, is a constant friend, a faithful friend, an unchanging friend, an everlasting friend: who that thinks of these things, but must enter into a proper apprehension of what the LORD JESUS saith, when he calleth his children friends? Dearest JESUS! how shall I enumerate the thousandth part of the acts of the most disinterested friendship, which thou hast manifested to my soul? What a Friend was the SON of GOD to our nature, when he passed by that of angels, and took on him the seed of Abraham? What friendship

was that, when JESUS became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich? What love, so unequalled, to die, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD! And what love like thine; when though all forsake us, JESUS will never leave nor forsake his redeemed? Yea, LORD! though we so often believe not, yet thou abidest faithful: JESUS cannot, will not, deny himself. Shall I not say then as the wise man; *Thine own friend and thy Father's friend forsake not!* Prov. xxvii. 10. Yes! blessed LORD, every where, and in all things, I will speak of thee, with the Church of old, and say, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!* Song v. 16.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

If the Reader recollects what was observed, in the preceding Chapter, on the one, chief, and great subject, of this Sermon of our LORD'S, namely, concerning the Person, GODHEAD, Work, and Ministry of the HOLY GHOST; he will remember, that it was reserved to the subsequent parts of CHRIST'S discourse, to notice the several offices of GOD the SPIRIT, as they were mentioned. Now here, in those verses, the LORD JESUS takes observation of *two* of them, namely, as the *Comforter*, and as the SPIRIT *of truth*. I therefore beg the Reader to remark with me, some few particulars relating to those blessed offices of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

First, as the Comforter. Now it is the special work of GOD the SPIRIT, to bring comfort into the conscience of the LORD'S people, in taking of the things of CHRIST and shewing to them; whereby he fills their hearts with joy and peace in believing, while he makes them to abound in hope through his own sovereign power. His very employment is consolation. And hence nothing can be more suited to him as a name, than the HOLY GHOST the Comforter! And, if a child of GOD at any time feels refreshed with the consolations of JESUS, or the contemplation of the love of GOD the FATHER; these precious things are of His working. And hence we are taught to pray for the quickenings of the SPIRIT; because the LORD the HOLY GHOST by those sweet influences, opens a communion between CHRIST and out souls. He manifests the love of the FATHER and the Son to the heart; and thus by holding up to our view their love, he awakens his own graces in our hearts, and leads forth the actings of faith and love in them, upon the Persons of the GODHEAD. Oh! the blessedness of the HOLY GHOST, when acting as the Comforter of the Church! What are all the promises and encouragements in the Word, until they are opened and applied by the LORD the SPIRIT? Blessed GOD! do thou prove thyself to my soul's joy, as the HOLY GHOST the Comforter, in all thy sevenfold gifts; that by opening and keeping open, a continual communion between CHRIST and my soul, I may hourly rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD.

Secondly. The LORD JESUS speaks of him as *the* SPIRIT *of truth*, to lead into all truth. And what a gracious, compassionate, and wise office, is this? How would the poor, dark ,ignorant, and senseless children of men, under the Adam-nature of a fallen sinful state, ever have the least apprehension of divine things, but from his divine teaching? Oh! thou Matchless Instructor! hadst thou not shewn me the utterly lost estate of my poor nature by the fall, how should I have ever known my ruin and misery? And hadst thou not opened mine eyes to see the glory and suitableness of the LORD JESUS, what should I ever have apprehended of his glory, and my need of him? Yea! gracious GOD the SPIRIT! hadst thou not warmed my soul with his love, as well as informed my understanding by thy grace, thousands of errors would have remained; and though I had obtained an head knowledge, yet no heart influence would have followed, but from thy sovereign saving power. But now, dearest LORD, whilst thou art mercifully pleased to be to me a SPIRIT of truth, leading to the right apprehension of all truth, and a SPIRIT of grace, leading to the right performance of all prayer; then the whole comes home warmed and endeared to my heart. I hear the voice behind me, and I feel a power within me, when at any time exercised with doubts or misgivings, saying, *This is the way*, (even CHRIST the way,) *walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* Isaiah xxx. 21. See chap. xvi. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not fail to observe the intimate oneness and union between CHRIST and his Church. The vine and its branches are not more closely formed in one, than JESUS and his people. Indeed, there are no figures, no images, either in nature or art, which can fully come up to the resemblance. All figures must fall short of the reality. But while we observe the closeness of union, let you and I be still more anxious to know whether we are the happy partakers of it. Are we indeed One with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us? *He that is joined to the* LORD *is one* SPIRIT. One principle actuates both. What JESUS loves, we love; what JESUS hates, we hate. We look to JESUS for all things, and desire to eye JESUS in all things. Moreover, if one Spirit be in both, we shall undertake nothing but in his strength, and seek nothing but his glory. And as the branch wholly hangs upon, and is kept alive by the vine, so all our graces are kept alive by life *in* JESUS, and communications *from* JESUS. Oh! for grace to know these things in a lively, active, spiritual enjoyment of them, that we may be increasing in desires after him, and loosening from every thing that is not in him, till we come to see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever.

Blessed HOLY Comforter of the LORD's people! Gracious SPIRIT of truth to lead into all truth! Oh! grant to me the knowledge of my LORD under all his sweet and precious offices! Send out LORD! thy light and thy truth to guide my poor soul continually! And, oh! for the daily, hourly renewing of the HOLY GHOST, to be shed abundantly upon the churches and people, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

The LORD'S *Sermon is continued through this Chapter, and here it is ended.* JESUS *comforts his Disciples with many sweet and precious Promises, and again dwells upon the gracious consolations which they should receive from the* HOLY GHOST.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them: and these things I said unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

I pray the Reader to remark how JESUS dwells upon the expediency of his departure, on the Church's account. *It is expedient for you that I go away.* So that the LORD doth not at all mention the joy that was before him, in returning to his FATHER, neither of the felicity to which he was going, in being received by the faithful gone before, who would come forth to congratulate the King on his taking possession of his kingdom. We hear of none of those things in the LORD'S farewell, but all that JESUS is discoursing upon is, concerning his dear children which he was about to leave behind. As if the whole heart of JESUS he would leave behind him. Precious LORD! Oh! for grace to have it always in remembrance.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement;

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more:

11 Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

Reader! It must have been a matter of great importance, that the LORD JESUS in this farewell sermon, dwelt so much upon the Person and Offices of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Never would CHRIST have described him so particularly, had it not been, that his Church might be taught every thing concerning Him, in whose teachings and consolations they were so highly concerned. I pray the Reader to indulge me in my endeavors to follow the footsteps of the LORD JESUS, in marking some at least, of the several features of character, by which GOD the SPIRIT, according to the LORD'S representation of him, was to be known.

The *regeneration*, which GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his covenant office-character, engaged to perform on the whole Church of CHRIST, no doubt comprehended, (as the greater includes the less,) all his blessed work. And this sovereign act, as hath been already observed, (see note on John xiv. 16—27.) is no doubt in point of importance, equal to the electing love of GOD the FATHER, or the betrothing and redeeming love of GOD the SON. But in the Almighty act of *regeneration*, is included every other office of GOD the SPIRIT. For as an Apostle under his authority hath said, in all the manifestations of the divine life, in which the Church *is changed into the same image from glory to glory; it is, even as by the* SPIRIT *of the* LORD. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

It will not be improper, neither I hope unprofitable, to take a brief view of some of those office-characters of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which have not been already noticed, and which the LORD JESUS hath specially marked in this sermon. They will serve in some degree to manifest the love of the SPIRIT to the Church.

I pass over, (because not spoken of in this place by JESUS,) the consideration of the work of GOD the HOLY GHOST on the Person of CHRIST. This forms a separate subject, but yet highly worthy of the first attention when speaking of the office-characters of GOD the SPIRIT, in relation to the everlasting covenant. He it was who formed the human nature of the SON of GOD in the womb. Matt. i. 18, 20. Luke i. 35. He it was who consecrated CHRIST to the Messiahship.

Isaiah xi. 1, 2. Acts x. 38. He it was who anointed CHRIST to all his offices, and so JESUS himself declared. Isaiah lxi. 1. with Luke iv. 18. He it was who wrought with JESUS in all his miracles. Matt. xii. 28. Acts x. 38. who wrought with CHRIST and the FATHER in his resurrection. Rom. i. 4. viii. 11. And He it is who now proclaims CHRIST in the hearts of his redeemed, when, like CHRIST in his resurrection from the dead, they are quickened from the death of sin by the HOLY GHOST. Ephes. ii. 1. For none can say, *that* JESUS *is the* LORD, *but by the* HOLY GHOST. 1 Cor. xii. 3. All these, and others of a like nature mentioned in scripture, are in proof of the work of GOD the HOLY GHOST upon the Person of JESUS; and in a subject, where at any time the Sacred Writers are speaking of his office-characters in the covenant, these things ought not to be overlooked or forgotten. But the LORD JESUS in this sermon, mentions only his gracious acts towards, and over the Church; and therefore it is to such only I would call more particularly the Reader's attention.

The LORD JESUS begins the subject here in speaking of the office-work of the HOLY GHOST, with observing how he will work conviction in the heart on account of *sin;* how he will proclaim *righteousness,* even the personal righteousness of JESUS, as all-effectual and compleat in the great work of redemption; and of *judgment* in the fullest establishment of the LORD JESUS, as Judge of quick and dead, which the Jews had attempted to call in question and deny.

Reader! it is a blessed confirmation of the truths of GOD, when the outward ministry of GOD's word, is inwrought in the heart by the inward effect. Will you allow me to ask, whether GOD the SPIRIT hath so glorified CHRIST in your heart by such testimonies of his office-work as these, in receiving of CHRIST's and shewing unto you? The question finds an answer as luminous as though written with a sun beam, when GOD the HOLY GHOST hath truly wrought these operations in the heart and conscience. He proves to a man's own feelings, the filth and guilt, and the loathsome nature of sin. He holds up JESUS in such views of his glory, greatness, fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, as determine the soul to behold in him, every thing suited to the want and misery of the sinner. He shews not only the ability, but the readiness of JESUS to receive, and bless the sinner in his low estate. And at length so overrules all the arguments, which sin, unbelief, the world, or the powers of darkness raise up in the way, that the heart is constrained to come to Him; and the soul, that in the first awakenings, under the conviction of sin, trembled with apprehensions to approach; at length finds the HOLY GHOST witnessing to the gracious estate of an interest in CHRIST, from the gift of GOD the FATHER, *before the foundation of the world.* Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 14—17.

I pray the Reader to notice another of the blessed employments of the HOLY GHOST in his office-work, namely, in *glorifying* CHRIST JESUS. And how is this done? Surely in the most blessed way and manner that the imagination can conceive. GOD the SPIRIT holds up the LORD JESUS as a most compleat SAVIOR. And while he shews us the sinfulness of our nature, he shews the holiness of JESUS; and with these different views, he so graciously works in the soul by his persuasive power and grace, that he inclines the heart of the true Israel

of GOD to receive CHRIST, and to barter sin for righteousness, and joy for sorrow; that while JESUS is glorified, the sinner is made happy; and thus this office of the HOLY GHOST is most compleatly answered.

I have known, however, some precious souls at a loss to apprehend what is meant by the HOLY GHOST's receiving of CHRIST, and shewing to them. They have been fearful that the application hath not been made. But, if they were to attend to the scripture words and not their own, and as JESUS hath stated this office-work of GOD the SPIRIT, the difficulty would vanish. The LORD does not say, that the HOLY GHOST shall glorify him by receiving of his, and *applying* to his people; but shewing them. And what is it to shew the people? Certainly it is simply this, and no more. The HOLY GHOST shews the sinner his own wants, and CHRIST's suitableness to supply those wants, and readiness in supplying them. And thus having shewn that a rich SAVIOR is suited for a poor sinner, and a poor sinner for a rich SAVIOR; sweetly and powerfully the blessed SPIRIT inclines the heart of the needy sinner to receive, and belief to the salvation of his soul. Hence CHRIST is glorified, and the sinner is made happy. This is to believe *the record* GOD *hath given of his* SON!

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew *it* unto you.

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman, when she is in travail hath sorrow,

because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

In what a full and comprehensive manner the LORD JESUS here speaks, at the opening of this paragraph, in relation to the common interest and property the FATHER and himself possessed *in all things;* and which included in it, all the persons of his Church and people. And, Reader! what a sweet thought is it for you, for me, for the whole Church, to keep in everlasting remembrance; that both the persons and the things which CHRIST takes such interest in, for his Church's present and eternal welfare, are as much the FATHER'S, and in which He takes equal regard with that of his SON; Oh! for grace to know this, and to live in the constant enjoyment of it!

I beg the Reader particularly to notice, what the LORD JESUS hath here said concerning prayer. He first observes, that *at that day, ye shall ask me nothing.* Not that he meant to discourage their coming to him in prayer, but rather on the contrary, for he soon after adds: *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* But according to my view, it forms a beautiful and an affectionate method of JESUS,

to invite them to be very often making their requests known unto him. He had just before said, that he was going away from them; that *they should weep and lament, while the world would rejoice.* Well! how will the LORD keep up their spirits during these exercises? This shall be the way. At that day you shall ask me nothing, but what I have already outrun your expectations in giving; agreeably to that sweet promise, Isaiah lxv. 24. It is as if JESUS had said, I shall be so much with you in spirit by the HOLY GHOST, whom I am going away to send to you, and he will endite all your petitions for you, in teaching you what your wants are, and my fulness to supply; that I shall be daily expecting to hear from you, and in comparison to what I expect to hear from you, hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; *Ask, therefore, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

And I pray the Reader to observe yet further, in confirmation, that this was CHRIST'S meaning; that they should be frequent and clamorous at the mercy seat; *I say not unto you that I will pray for you,* (said CHRIST,) *for the* FATHER *himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from* GOD. What a tender, blessed method, was here of JESUS, in shewing them how his whole heart was with them, and that he took part in all that concerned them. JESUS did not mean to say, that his office of Intercessor would cease when he got to heaven. So far from it, that it was one of the great purposes for which he was going there. JESUS would bear them unceasingly upon his breast, and upon his heart, as the Jewish high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes, when he went in before the mercy-seat. But saith JESUS, my FATHER takes such an interest, as well as myself, in all that concerns you, that all your causes and interests must be eternally safe and secure. Reader! put the whole of those words of JESUS together, and look at them in one united view. *I say not unto you, that I will pray the* FATHER *for you.* I need not say it. You know it. You know my whole heart is with you. Nay, if I leave you, it is on this very account, to carry up every thing that concerns you before my FATHER, and to see the whole of my grand designs for which I came on earth, accomplished for you. And moreover, though I shall unceasingly be thus engaged for you in heaven, in my office of an unchanging priesthood; yet such is my FATHER'S love to you, because ye have loved me, that whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in my Name, he will give it you. So that your persons and your concerns are everlastingly secured, both in my FATHER'S love and mine. And I will send the HOLY GHOST, who shall not only act in my place and room, and shew you all your wants and my glory, with my infinite readiness to supply; but He shall endite all the letters and petitions you send me, and such a blessed intercourse shall be kept up between me and you, by reason of these things, that what He teacheth you to pray for upon earth, shall be in exact correspondence to my intercession for you in heaven. Reader! what saith your heart's joy to this view of the subject? *Have you so learned* CHRIST, *and heard him, and been taught of Him, as the truth is in* JESUS? Ephes. iv. 20, 21.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace, in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

It should seem by those acknowledgements of the Apostles, that now they understood plainly all that JESUS meant, and his sweet words were no longer proverbs; as JESUS just before had said they were, (verse 25.) but plain, and suited to their apprehension. And hence I venture to suppose, (but by no means to speak positively,) that the LORD was pleased as he drew near the close of his sermon to enlarge their minds, that they might have more clear and extended views of this great subject, on which he had been speaking to them. And, Reader! it will be our mercy in like manner, on this glorious view JESUS hath here given of the Person, Work, and Offices of GOD the HOLY GHOST; if you and I can join issue with the Apostles, and say, *Now speaketh our* LORD *plainly, and speaketh no parable. Now are we sure that* JESUS *knoweth all things, and needeth not that any man should ask him. By this we believe that He came forth from* GOD!

It will form I hope no unprofitable conclusion in our Commentary upon this blessed sermon of CHRIST, if we briefly gather into one point of view, some of the precious things which JESUS hath left in it to his Church, concerning the Person and love-offices of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Sure I am, the review of the whole will be profitable, if so be, (and which I humbly beg both for myself and Reader,) that the Almighty SPIRIT of whom I write, shall graciously condescend to be our teacher.

We have beheld in these chapters, with what a world of tenderness the LORD JESUS hath introduced the subject of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, and how JESUS before his departure brought them into an acquaintance with his person, and nature, and offices. We have seen how minutely the LORD JESUS hath dwelt upon the many distinguishing testimonies of character, by which the HOLY GHOST should be known. And we have discovered at the close of our LORD'S discourse on this most interesting subject, that so much grace from the LORD accompanied his divine instruction on the same, that the Apostles entered into a perfect apprehension both of the person and coming of the HOLY GHOST. Here then I would beg the Reader to

pause, and before we pass away from our review of the same sermon of CHRIST, which was made so blessed to them; I would very affectionately ask the Reader, as I desire to put the same question to my own heart, with what sentiments do we close the LORD's discourse, concerning the same momentous truths of GOD, in our apprehensions of GOD the HOLY GHOST?

Behold him in the eternity of his nature, and essence, and GODHEAD. One of the HOLY undivided Three, which bear record in heaven. 1 John v. 7. Contemplate Him in the numberless, undeniable testimonies, which have been brought before you of his Person, through both volumes of Scripture. Mark well his special *offices*, in his covenant character as relating to the Church. And here most eminently, and indeed as comprehending every other, in the great work of *regeneration;* which sovereign and Almighty act becomes so essential to every child of GOD to partake in, that not a single spiritual mercy can we lay claim to, until this is wrought, and when done, CHRIST with all his blessings and benefits are ours. For so it is written in the scripture. *To them,* (saith the Apostle,) *that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of* GOD *and our* SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST: *Grace and peace be multiplied; according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; being made partakers of the divine nature.* 2 Pet. i. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And when this gracious act is wrought in the soul of him, who is the highly favoured object of JEHOVAH's love, in his Threefold character of Person; all the after manifestations of the HOLY GHOST, as might be expected, are made to maintain and carry on that divine nature, of which, as the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle hath said, the regenerated are made partakers. From this commencement of the renewed life, when quickened by the SPIRIT in the souls of those who were before dead in trespasses and sins, Ephes. ii. 1. the whole is dated in every subsequent act of grace. The HOLY GHOST, as JESUS hath described him, becomes to all on whom his regenerating mercy hath passed, the *Comforter;* to give joy and peace in believing, and the abounding in hope, through his sovereign power. He becomes the SPIRIT *of truth,* when errors creep into the mind, *to guide into all truth.* The *Glorifier of* JESUS, in holding him up in all his glory to his people, and secretly and sweetly inclining their hearts to believe in his name. The *Remembrancer* of JESUS, in bringing again to the forgetful minds of his people, some past manifestations of JESUS, and supporting them in the recollection with abiding hopes of future love-tokens from the LORD, in the review of former. In short, as a teacher, a *spirit of grace and supplication;* of *holiness* and *sanctification;* an *helper in the infirmities of his people;* and an *earnest* and *seal* of the promised inheritance; and in the numberless, nameless ways, by which His Almighty Ministry is carried on, from the first moment of regeneration until grace is finished in glory; the whole efficient work of the Church, in her ministers, ordinances, and people; all is GOD's the SPIRIT. *He* it is *that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure!* Philip. ii. 13.

Reader! what saith your experience to these things! Are the Apostles conclusions our conclusions? their views of the HOLY GHOST,

our views of the HOLY GHOST? Or, after all, the LORD JESUS hath said in this most blessed Chapter concerning Him, do we say of JESUS, as they did of the Prophet's Sermon, *Ah*, LORD GOD! *doth he not speak parables?* Ezek. xx. 49.

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD GOD Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come! Blessed for ever be GOD the FATHER, for his everlasting love, in having chosen the Church in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. And blessed be GOD the SON, for having betrothed the Church from everlasting, and having redeemed her from all the ruins of the fall, in this time state of existence. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for his everlasting love, and accomplishing the regeneration of the Church, when *dead in trespasses and sins!*

Oh! for grace, to be often contemplating the office acts and manifestations of love, as shewn towards the Church in the communications of all that is communicable in grace, from each glorious person of the GODHEAD. Do thou, blessed SPIRIT, daily make a sweet revelation of the whole to, and in the souls of the redeemed, that the glory of the FATHER's provision for the Church, in the person and blood of CHRIST, and the full mercy of the everlasting covenant, may, through thy sovereign power, be brought home, and confirmed in the heart. Oh! for grace to know GOD the HOLY GHOST, in every sweet office-act in which JESUS hath here so blessedly represented him. Thou knowest, Almighty *Comforter*, that my poor soul can find no comfort but from thy gracious operations. I can have no access, can find no freedom at the throne, nay, can have no disposition to go there, unless thy sweet leadings influence and guide me thither. Oh! then do thou, Almighty *Quickener* of the LORD's people, *direct my heart into the love of* GOD, *and into the patient waiting for* CHRIST. Do thou become to my poor soul, the SPIRIT *of truth;* and sure I am, amidst all the heresies of the day, I shall be guided into all truth. Do thou *glorify* to my view the LORD JESUS, and then no Infidel amidst a CHRIST-despising generation, will for a moment raise a mist to obscure my clear apprehension of His GODHEAD. Precious, precious *Teacher*, in the Church of JESUS! do thou but mercifully fulfil all thy sweet office-characters, in and to my poor soul, and more will be accomplished to the settlement of that peace of mind, and peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding in my heart, than can be wrought in ten thousand years of human endeavors without thee. Yes! thou Almighty SPIRIT of *Sanctification* and *Holiness*, if thou wilt condescend to communicate of thy divine unction, thou wilt bring my LORD JESUS, in all his fulness and suitability, so immediately home in union with my redeemed soul, that I shall know him as *the* LORD *my righteousness*, and live upon him, and live to him, as being made *the righteousness of* GOD *in Him.*

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS *having finished in the foregoing Chapter his Sermon, here follows it up with Prayer. He first makes the Subject of it Personal, in Relation to Himself and the* FATHER. *He next offers up Prayer for his Apostles. And, lastly, for his whole Church.*

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

I desire to enter upon this Chapter with all humility of soul, looking up for continual grace to go before me, and follow me, as I tread over every part of the sacred ground in the contents of it. And I request the Reader to remember, that in every observation which I venture to propose, I propose it but as an humble offering rather of enquiry than of decision. May GOD the HOLY GHOST be my teacher!

And, first, let us contemplate the glorious Speaker, and the manner in which he opened this wonderful prayer. He had been unfolding his very heart in all the fulness which lay there of his love to his people. He now opens his very heart to his FATHER. And, as our Great High Priest, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, as intimating the heaven of his mind, and said, FATHER! *the hour is come!* What hour? Nay, that hour for which the numbering of hours became important, and to which every preceding hour from the fall, in the time-state of the Church ministered. It was that hour to which heaven and earth had respect, in the death of CHRIST, as the one grand and momentous event of all time, and to the accomplishment of which the LORD of hosts referred, when he said, *And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.* Zech. iii. 9.

Glorify thy Son, that thy SON *may also glorify thee.* I pray the Reader not to overlook in this request of JESUS, the mutual interest which is expressed in the object desired. It hath been before observed, that the glory of the LORD JESUS, as GOD-Man-Mediator, never was

more highly manifested than when it brake through the dark cloud which covered the face of the earth at CHRIST's crucifixion. And what transcendent dignity and glory did JEHOVAH put upon CHRIST, when he committed to him the great work of redemption. Yea, in the very hour, as CHRIST called it, (though it was *six* full hours he hung upon the cross,) when CHRIST bore in *his* own person the sins of all his Church, and the wrath of GOD due to sin; yet such was the victory he then obtained over death, hell, and the grave, and such the everlasting happiness he procured by it for his members, and such the rich revenue of everlasting glory and honor to himself by this one offering of himself, that it may be truly said, never did JEHOVAH more fully glorify his dear SON, through the whole of his ministry, than on that solemn, but most auspicious day. And on the other hand, never was JEHOVAH more glorified, than by the obedience and blood shedding of his dear SON in our nature. For although, strictly and properly speaking, GOD in his essence and perfections is incapable of receiving accessions to his glory by any acts offered unto him, no, not even by CHRIST himself, for so JESUS by the Spirit of prophecy ages before had said; (see Psm. xvi. 2, 3.) yet in the manifested glory of the LORD, as sin had attempted to tarnish it, JESUS, by his great undertaking, had done more than restored it. For what could more display the glory of JEHOVAH, than One in his own nature fulfilling all his commands, when taking into himself an union with our's, and thus giving a perfection to his obedience, as the obedience of the GOD-Man CHRIST JESUS? Here was glory indeed manifested to the LORD, such as the everlasting and unsinning obedience of men and angels, yea, the whole creation of GOD to all eternity could not have wrought. This then JESUS did, when having by his righteousness brought in an everlasting righteousness, and by his death having overcome death; *he finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity,* destroyed Satan's empire, procured salvation for his whole body the Church, and *restored perfect order among all the works of* GOD. Full of these grand ideas, and infinitely more than our highest conceptions can possibly enter into, we may suppose the mind of the Great Redeemer of his Church to have been occupied, when with his eyes lifted to heaven, he said, FATHER! *the hour is come, glorify thy* SON, *that thy* SON *may also glorify thee!*

Our LORD proceeds. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh.* Here let us pause, and ponder well those words of CHRIST, which he speaks as CHRIST-GOD-Man. Not as GOD only, for as such he could have nothing given him. All was his, in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST. But JESUS here speaks in his *office-character,* in the covenant. It is of the highest importance to have a proper apprehension of these things. The everlasting covenant between the persons of the GODHEAD, for making manifest all that is communicable of JEHOVAH's glory to his creatures, consists in certain office-characters, by which each glorious person in the GODHEAD is known. Both the eternal and original appointment of the Church before all worlds, and the recovery and salvation of the Church during her time-state of being, are the result of everlasting love, equally flowing from the HOLY THREE in ONE; and by which the whole become the equal and united object of love, obedience, and praise to all eternity. In these *office-characters,* the Scriptures inform us, how each glorious

person co-operated in the accomplishment of the great design. And, as on the part of the FATHER, he is said to have *sent* the SON to be the SAVIOR of the world, 1 John iv. 14. and the LORD JESUS is said to have all things *given* to him by the FATHER, John iii. 35. so here CHRIST speaks of it under this view, and in his office-character, as GOD-Man-Mediator. It is in this sense the LORD JESUS thus expressed himself in those words.

And it may not be improper to remark, that this power is said by CHRIST to be given to him *over all flesh*. Not simply in relation to his Church, but as universal and eternal LORD of heaven and earth. *Paul* saith, that by CHRIST were *all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth*. And not only created *by* him, but *for* him; and that *by him* all things consist. So that he is not only the head of his body the Church, but *the fulness which filleth all in all*. I pray the Reader to consult those scriptures. Coloss. i. 15—20. Ephes. i. 15, to the end. We begin at the middle of the subject in relation to CHRIST as GOD-Man-Mediator, when we begin at his work of redemption. The SON of GOD, as the Wisdom of GOD, was set up from everlasting. Prov. viii. 22—31. And the Church had a being in CHRIST, as CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. Ephes. iii. 9, 10, 11. And who shall say what other objects were designed in the infinite mind of JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, in One of those sacred Persons taking into union with himself that holy portion of human nature, by which the SON of GOD became man? Who shall determine what other glory, beside that of JEHOVAH's glory in the Church, hath been and shall everlastingly be manifested by it? Nay, who shall draw the limits to what that glory shall extend, in the wonderful discovery made of JEHOVAH in the person of CHRIST, without whom, as it should seem from scripture, no manifestation could have been made for ever? John i. 18.—But I can venture no further.

We see then by our LORD's words, that CHRIST hath power given him over all flesh. And JESUS adds, *that he should give eternal life to as many as the* FATHER *had given him*. Pause over these precious words. And, first, observe what an unanswerable proof they carry with them of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. For who less than the Eternal GOD, can give Eternal life? The very possession of the property implies the eternal nature of the possessor. Reader! never lose sight of this! Next observe what JESUS speaks of those to whom he is to give eternal life. It is to *as many as the* FATHER *hath given him*. If there were no other passage in Scripture, this would be sufficient in proof that CHRIST hath a Church, for whom this blessing of eternal life, with all its preliminaries, is intended. But the word of GOD is full in point to the same purport. John vi. 37. John x. 27—30. 1 John v. 11, 12. Jude 1. Reader! what a sweet thought ariseth out of this view, short as it is, concerning CHRIST's power, and concerning CHRIST's office-character. JESUS hath eternal life, yea, is himself eternal life. And JESUS hath it to impart to as many as the FATHER hath given him; yea, is himself their life, and their portion for ever. John xiv. 19, 20.

Our blessed LORD next proceeds to shew, as far as our present unripe faculties can comprehend the subject, in what this eternal life consists. JESUS saith, *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee*

the only true GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST, *whom thou hast sent.* Our apprehensions go but a little way in this subject. Life, in every sense of the word, is a mystery. Our *natural* life is involved in endless difficulties to explain. That we live, and that we perform the several actions of life, we know. And the word of the LORD informs us, that it is *in Him that we live, and move, and have our being.* Acts xvii. 28. But further our greatest discoveries do not extend. *Spiritual* life becomes yet more remote from our knowledge, more than of the fact itself. And *eternal* life JESUS here declares to consist in the knowledge of *the only true* GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST, *whom he hath sent.* Here then we have authority to conclude, that in the proper apprehension of the only true GOD, in his three-fold character of persons, and of the person, and offices, and relations of JESUS CHRIST, as the GOD-Man-Mediator the glorious Head and Husband of his Church, *this is life eternal.* Our LORD doth not say that it leads to it, but that it is. Not that this knowledge shall hereafter bring the happy possessors of it to life eternal, but that it is now already in possession. *He that believeth on the* SON *hath everlasting life.* John iii. 36. GOD *hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his* SON. *He that hath the* SON *hath life.* 1 John v. 11, 12. So that this eternal life, be it what it may, is not to be the possession only of the world to come; but in the present state. For being in CHRIST, in the possession of Him; his people possess eternal life in him.

I do not think it necessary, to detain the Reader, with endeavouring to explain, what all the Bible in every part is explaining, in relation to the knowledge of GOD, and of CHRIST. I shall only beg to observe, that it is not concerning the nature and Being of JEHOVAH, and the mode of his existence, that is proposed to us in those words of CHRIST, or any other part of Scripture, to know. These subjects must ever be, both in time, and to all eternity, beyond the grasp of our faculties. JEHOVAH would no longer be incomprehensible, if any of his creatures could attain that knowledge. But the knowledge our LORD speaks of, is in relation to those discoveries, which he hath been pleased to make of himself, in his threefold character of Persons, in the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory; and which have a special regard to his Church and people. Reader! I humbly conceive, that this is life eternal, to know GOD the FATHER in his office-character! his everlasting love to the Church in CHRIST before the foundation of the world: to know GOD the SON in his office-character, his oneness and union with the FATHER in his divine nature; and his oneness and union with his Church in his human nature: And to know GOD the HOLY GHOST, as distinct in Person from both, yet in essence and in glory One with the FATHER and the SON; and in relation to his office-character to the Church, loving the Church with the same everlasting love, and as engaged in all Covenant offices, for her being, and well being in CHRIST, to all eternity.

This I humbly conceive to form the outlines of what the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath here said, of life eternal: *to know the only true* GOD *and* JESUS CHRIST *whom he hath sent.* Isaiah xlviii. 16.

Our LORD proceeds. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* Reader! let you and I seek grace to bless GOD, for what JESUS hath here said. None but JESUS could thus speak. No angel of light; no, nor the whole crea-

tion of GOD, could ever adopt such language. For although JEHOVAH's glory is seen *in* them, and *by* them; and in this sense the Psalmist speaks, when he saith, *The heavens declare the glory of* GOD, &c. Psm. xix. 1. Yet nothing can add to JEHOVAH's glory, neither can any take from it. But in the Person of the GOD-Man CHRIST JESUS, JEHOVAH is glorified, and hath been glorified, when in the dignity of his Person and work, the glory of JEHOVAH is made manifest, to the whole intellectual creation of GOD. And what endears this view of CHRIST still more, is the part which his Church bears in it; because in the great work, the LORD JESUS stood forth and acted as the Head, and Representative of his people. Reader! do not fail to connect this view of the subject, with CHRIST's finished work. The Church of CHRIST, in every individual member, hath *all sinned and come short of the glory of* GOD. JESUS, our Head and Husband, hath fulfilled all righteousness; and hath done the whole for his people. Yea, in consequence of the perfection of his Person, and the perfection of his work, being the obedience and merits of GOD-Man Mediator; he hath done more in honoring GOD's law, than we have done by sin to dishonor GOD: and infinite in value, and in efficiency, is the finished work of CHRIST. Oh! for grace, while we thus contemplate our Great High Priest and Representative, in the close of his ministry, thus speaking to the FATHER, in giving in before him the blessed accomplishment of his mission; all his Church and people may by faith come under the Censer of his Incense, and behold our compleat justification in Him!

And now, (saith JESUS,) *O* FATHER, *glorify thou me with thine own-self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The work finished, CHRIST looks to the consequences, as by Covenant settlements agreed upon. Hence the Apostle saith, when speaking of CHRIST; *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. Heb. xii. 2.

The great question here is, what glory doth JESUS here allude to! I speak with all possible reverence when I say, I humbly apprehend, it could not be that essential underived glory, which equally belongs to the whole, and to each Person of the GODHEAD, as JEHOVAH. For the SON of GOD, as GOD, could never ask, or receive this; being from all eternity his own. But the glory here spoken of by CHRIST, seems very plainly to refer to that glory which belonged to Him as GOD-Man Mediator, when from everlasting he stood up, the Head, and Husband of his Church. There was a *Personal* glory as GOD-Man, which he had with the FATHER before the world was, before that he became incarnate; in the time-state of the Church, and consequently before that JESUS had acquired any *office*-glory, in finishing the work the FATHER gave him to do. Yea, the SON of GOD had this glory, as GOD-Man, from the union of nature of GOD and Man in one Person, though he had never in the time-state of the Church purchased the glory of redemption, in bringing his Church out of the ruins of the fall. But while I say thus much, I beg it may be understood, that I do not presume to say which of those glories it was to which CHRIST referred: whether of *Person* or of *Office*, or of both, when he thus addressed the FATHER.

Thus much, however, we may, under divine teaching, safely say;

CHRIST had a glory with the FATHER *before the world was.* In the time-state of the Church during his ministry, this glory was in a great measure obscured. For, although he manifested forth his glory by miracles; and occasionally as in the Mount of Transfiguration, there was given certain burstings forth, in proof, that *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the* GODHEAD *bodily.* Coloss. ii. 9. Yet it may be truly said, that while upon earth, he for the most part appeared, as *the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.* But though I presume not to speak concerning the nature of that glory which the LORD JESUS had in view in those words: yet I detain the Reader to observe, that we learn from them those very sweet and precious instructions. *First,* That CHRIST, as CHRIST, that is, the SON of GOD in our nature, had glory in this Personal Character with the FATHER before all worlds: *Secondly,* That the glory JESUS here speaks of, was a glory which he had with the FATHER; though the distinction of the Persons at the same time is hereby plainly proved. And *thirdly.* As the LORD JESUS prays to be glorified by the FATHER, *with thine ownself:* (as JESUS wordeth it,) the unity and design of the whole GODHEAD, in all the purposes and pleasure of JEHOVAH, concerning the Church, is fully manifested and confirmed. *My* FATHER *worketh hitherto,* (saith CHRIST,) *and I work.* John v. 17.

Thus far, this prayer of our LORD, had special respect to himself and his FATHER. In which the Reader will perceive, how much our dear LORD dwells upon those great points; the glory which he had manifested of his FATHER, in his finished work in time: and the glory to which JESUS looked, both in what was opening before him, in the hour now come; and in the future enjoyment of the same glory, which he had with the FATHER, before all worlds. Precious JESUS! may all thy Church know thee in all thy glory; and *every knee bow before thee, and every tongue confess that* JESUS CHRIST *is* LORD *to the glory of* GOD *the* FATHER.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

In this part of our LORD's prayer, JESUS hath a special eye to his Apostles; not indeed to the exclusion of any of his Church, which no doubt were all alike equally dear to him; but probably, as the first Preachers, Ministers of his Gospel, and in an age when peculiarly difficulties would arise to oppose their persons and their labors; the LORD had them more immediately in view. And before we enter upon the several parts of our LORD's prayer, concerning them, I cannot but notice with particular attention, and entreat the Reader to regard it with me also, how very gracious it was in JESUS to say what he hath said, in the strong recommendation which he makes of them to his FATHER, in their hearing; that they might perceive, how deep they lay in his heart. Neither was it less attentive in GOD the HOLY GHOST, to cause it to be recorded, that the Church in all ages might see, how much CHRIST loved his people; what interest and property the FATHER had in them: and with what care and love, the HOLY

GHOST watched over them, in preserving such sweet testimonies of the Redeemer's affection, in everlasting remembrance.

I must not indulge myself as I could wish, to go over, verse by verse, the many blessed things which are contained in them. It would far exceed the limits of *a Poor Man's Commentary*. I shall therefore content myself, (and I hope the Reader will be contented also,) in just sketching some of the more prominent parts of this most unequalled prayer of our LORD. May the LORD bless it.

And here, *first*, I beg the Reader to notice, the ground, upon which JESUS lays the principal stress of confidence, in the recommendation of his people to his FATHER. He speaks of them, as the men whom the FATHER *gave him out of the world:* that they were the FATHER'S, before he gave them to CHRIST; his property, and consequently his care. Yea, JESUS intimates by the earnestness of his recommendation of them, that he prized them the more highly, on the FATHER'S account. And the LORD JESUS found the greater confidence from this consideration, that his FATHER would preserve them, and keep them, and watch over them, for good, and at length bring them home, to behold that glory, which the FATHER had given him and be with him for ever. Reader! do not fail to observe, these sweet things in CHRIST'S prayer. Neither overlook, how much JESUS dwells upon that one consideration, of the FATHER'S property in his Church and people. He repeats it again, and again: *thine they were, and thou gavest them me. All mine are thine; and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.* Think how dear that Church must be in GOD the FATHER'S view, who in proof of it, gave that Church to his dear SON? And think how dear to CHRIST, in that he hath redeemed it with his blood? And how dear to GOD the HOLY GHOST, who notwithstanding that He is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;* yet condescends to make the bodies of those poor sinners his temple? 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

The next thing to be noticed, in this most blessed prayer of CHRIST, is his own personal love for his Church, and particularly manifested to the Apostles, as representatives of the Church, in thus taking such concern for them, before his departure. Nothing can more fully express the love of the blessed JESUS, than in the very earnest pleadings he here makes use of, with the FATHER, in their behalf. He knew their nature, their weakness, their corruptions. He knew the enemies which they would have to encounter; and the sharp exercises of persecutions, to which they would be exposed, after he had left them. And hence the earnestness and vehemency of his recommendation of them to the FATHER. HOLY FATHER! *keep* (said he) *through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* Reader! do not forget, that in this vast interest JESUS took in the concerns of his disciples *then*, that he equally takes concern in all the interests of his people *now*. *He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust.* And if the Apostles needed such attention, surely JESUS will not be less regardful of us. Never fail to connect such regard of JESUS for the Church, in every age of her warfare, while beholding the LORD'S tenderness over the Apostles. His love is the same: and his attention the same. *Having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them unto the end.* John xiii. 1.

nd as another token of CHRIST'S love to his Church in this beau-

tiful prayer, I pray the Reader to observe, with what tenderness and affection JESUS speaks of them: *They have kept thy word. They have received the words which I have given them. They have believed that thou didst send me.* Every thing by which the LORD JESUS could recommend them, he graciously takes notice of, by way of endearment. Not a word but in their favor. No complaint of their dulness, and unbelief, which they had frequently manifested, during his going in and out before them. But all is tender and affectionate in JESUS, in presenting them to his FATHER. Reader! remember, such is JESUS now. Though he knows what subjects we are of sin, and temptation; and what *fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken:* yet doth he still take up our cause, plead for all our mercies, and never ceaseth, nor will cease, his intercession, until he hath brought home his whole Church to glory.

Neither should we overlook, in this prayer of JESUS, the striking contrast he makes, between his Church and the ungodly. The LORD draws in it a line of the most marked discrimination. *I pray for them,* (saith CHRIST,) *I pray not for the world. The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world; even as I am not of the world.* Reader! If there be a single truth of GOD more pointed and express than another, surely it is that, in which CHRIST's union and personal relationship with his people is insisted upon. The LORD seems to delight in it. He dwells upon it. His FATHER's interest in his people. His own interest, and the HOLY GHOST's interest. His people's distinction from the world; the world's hatred on this account: and their union with him, the cause of the whole. Upon this subject I would just add, If JESUS delighted to make this discrimination between his people and the world, ought not his people to do the same? Did JESUS mark it in his prayer, and shall not we in praise? Was the LORD pleased to behold his people with this marked distinction, and to speak of it with complacency and delight; and shall not his people, the highly favored objects of discriminating grace, notice it in like manner.

One observation more in this sweet prayer of JESUS. He saith, that, *those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* What a subject is opened and answered in those few words, in confirmation of discriminating grace? And how very fully do they prove, what indeed all the other parts of Scripture concur in, to the same point: that the Church of CHRIST is chosen in CHRIST, all the members preserved and kept in CHRIST, have their being and well being in CHRIST; and being one with CHRIST, He is their sole life of grace here, in the time-state of the Church, and will be their life of glory in the eternal world for ever. While on the other hand, where there is no grace-union with CHRIST, in the original and eternal purpose of JEHOVAH: FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; in the FATHER's gift, the SON's betrothing, and the HOLY GHOST's unction; the fall in the Adam-nature must remain, and from having no relation *to* CHRIST, neither interest *in* CHRIST, the Scripture must be fulfilled; that while all that are given to CHRIST are kept, the son of perdition cannot but be lost. And in relation to *Judas,* to whom CHRIST here refers; though given, and chosen as an Apostle, yet not as a member of CHRIST's mystical body. He had indeed obtained part of the ministry, but not the

least part of grace. JESUS knew him for a devil, at the time he chose him for an Apostle. And the subsequent acts of his life, were the effects of that diabolical influence. (See John xiii. 2—17. and Commentary). And the preservation of the eleven Apostles, was not from works of righteousness which they had done, for *they were men of like passions with ourselves;* but for their safety, and security in CHRIST. JESUS saith: *those whom thou gavest me I have kept.* Their being chosen in CHRIST, and accepted in the beloved, the HOLY GHOST declares, by *Paul,* to have been prior acts to those of redemption through CHRIST's blood, and the forgiveness of sins. I pray the Reader to notice these grand and momentous truths, with the attention they so highly merit, as they are stated: Ephes. i. 3—7. And may the LORD the HOLY GHOST be praised, for the very great sweetness and preciousness of that Scripture. In relation to the awfulness of this doctrine, in our LORD's prayer, it would be the wisdom of the LORD's people, to ponder well their high privileges, and *rejoice with trembling.* And some of those many sweet scriptures, which are in confirmation of the truths of GOD, will always bring relief to the mind, under every distressing thought, which may at times arise, concerning the reprobate. Strictly, and properly speaking, the Church hath no more to do with the fall of man, in the graceless and irreclaimable; than we have to do with the fall of angels. And those soul reviving words of the LORD JESUS, will act on the mind, when graciously applied by the HOLY GHOST, in any dark and tempting hour, as an anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast, which like an anchor to the ship on an enemy's coast, enables the mariners to weather out the storm. *I thank thee, O* FATHER, (said the LORD JESUS,) LORD *of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so* FATHER, *for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Matt. xi. 25, 26.

Allow me to call the Reader's attention to one feature more in this part of our LORD's prayer as more immediately relating to his Apostles; and I will trespass no longer. JESUS prays for *their sanctification;* and declares, that *for their sakes he sanctifies himself.*

That CHRIST is the sanctification of his Church, and the compleat holiness of his people, is a truth, to which the whole tenor of the Gospel bears record. Hence, all the Persons of the GODHEAD are said to have concurred in this gracious act. Jude i. Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Cor. i. 30. Heb. x. 10. And sanctification is as compleat a work as justification. Grace in the knowledge of the LORD, is indeed progressive: for the Church is said to *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our* LORD *and* SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. 2 Pet. iii. 18. But we no where read of a progressive sanctification. Indeed the very principle itself implies perfection. A soul regenerated is brought into a spiritual life: made partaker of the divine nature, for that *divine power is said to have given all things that pertain to life and godliness.* See 2 Pet. i. 1—4. And this regeneration is equal in all, whom the HOLY GHOST quickens. All the after acts of the SPIRIT, are acts upon this new life, drawn forth into exercise, upon the Person and work of CHRIST, in the actings of faith and love. But the life of sanctification in CHRIST, once imparted, can be no more than life: neither capable of increase or diminution.

In relation to the persons of the Apostles, in the LORD's prayer

for them, that they might be sanctified through the truth; I venture to believe, it had respect to their personal ministry, and character: that being sanctified through the truth, they might have more and more enlarged views of truth, in the great purposes of the everlasting Covenant: and from being taught themselves in a more extensive manner, when the HOLY GHOST should come upon them, in an open display of his power, they might be made the medium and channel, of informing others. And, Reader! the same holds equally good, with every child of GOD, when regenerated by the HOLY GHOST. That blessed and gracious Covenant work of the SPIRIT, is as compleat an act, *as the offering of the body of* JESUS CHRIST *once for all.* GOD the HOLY GHOST will indeed call forth the soul he hath regenerated, and brought forth, from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness in CHRIST; in daily actings of faith and grace, as from a soul alive to GOD, in, and through, JESUS CHRIST our LORD: but the quickening, from death to life, and sanctifying the renewed nature of the new man, *which after* GOD *is created in righteousness and true holiness* is wrought but once, and that all effectual. So that as *Paul* saith; *but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the* LORD JESUS, *and by the* SPIRIT *of our* GOD. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

And in relation to what JESUS saith, *For their sakes I sanctify myself.* Never surely can it be supposed, that CHRIST meant to say, that he made himself more holy, for that was and is impossible; but that he set himself apart for their sakes, in his Office-Character of Redeemer. Not for the Apostles only, but his whole Church: *All* (as he elsewhere saith,) *whom the* FATHER *hath given him.* John vi. 37. And that all might be sanctified in Him, and through Him, the truth. And from this most precious Scripture, every child of GOD, when regenerated and made alive in CHRIST, may gather the richest assurance of faith; that in the perfection of CHRIST, and his dedication of himself for his people, they may know their sanctification, *by the offering of the body of* JESUS CHRIST *once for all.* They feel the efficacy of it in their hearts, and consciences. And they are enabled through faith *in* CHRIST, and strength *from* CHRIST, through the blessed influences of the SPIRIT, to live and *rejoice in hope of the glory of* GOD. For such believing views become the full desire of the soul, in that Covenant *that is ordered in all things and sure,* and founded in CHRIST *before the world began.* Titus i. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

So much for the second part, of this most blessed prayer of our LORD; which, beside the *general* respect, it hath, here and there to the whole Church, hath some more immediate and special regard to the Apostles; and all taken together, serve to lay open the heart of CHRIST to his people, and to shew, that every thing of love, and grace, and mercy, is there flowing, in endless streams, towards his chosen.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father,

art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 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; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it:* that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

In this part of the LORD's prayer, his whole Church is included, yea, expressly prayed for. And I have often found cause to bless the LORD JESUS, for the very sweet and gracious manner of expression which he was pleased to use, in the introduction of it, when he said, by way of distinction, from what he had before said for the Apostles: *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word.* It is in my view, as if the LORD JESUS had said: The blessings I am procuring for those my redeemed, which are now around me, and within the hearing of what I say, I mean not to limit to them, but that the whole may be extended to all my Church; in the thousands, and ten thousands of my children, which are yet unborn. And while I desire some more special effects of my great salvation may be communicated to those my Apostles, to qualify them for the ministry of the word; my will is, that the whole body of the Church may partake together, in all the blessed consequences of my mission. That oneness and union, that perfection and glory *in* me, and that everlasting presence *with* me, to which the whole Church shall finally be brought; may be the privilege and blessedness of all. I humbly conceive, that our LORD's words, in the opening of this concluding clause of his prayer, may, without violence to the several expressions contained in it, be supposed as conveying those things. And I beg the Reader to remark with me, the manner in which the LORD JESUS enforceth the several blessings he enumerates.

FATHER! *I will.* Here is no petition, nor request; but what JESUS saith, is expressed in the nature of a right, or demand. And the reason is obvious. In the several transactions of the HOLY THREE in ONE, the glorious Almighty Covenanters have mutually engaged to each other. They are all alike equal in GODHEAD. And they are alike equal in Covenant Offices. They have therefore guaranteed to each other. So that in the Intercession of CHRIST; though by virtue of his human nature, this office leads to the exercise of prayer: yet not by a way of petition, but of right. JESUS demands the fulfilment of Covenant stipulations; and as such saith, for all he pleads: FATHER! *I will!*

I must not indulge here again, no more than upon the former occasion, to enlarge on the several subjects, which are contained in those concluding verses of our LORD's prayer: But I crave the favor of the Reader, that I may be permitted to glance at one or two of the more prominent points, JESUS hath so sweetly dwelt upon.

And *first:* that union and oneness which JESUS here insists upon; and which, the LORD speaks of so frequently, in this Chapter. We shall do well to notice it at least, though to enter into the full apprehension of it is impossible. That JESUS himself took much delight in it is very certain, for he makes mention of it continually in his prayer. And if it was dear to CHRIST, how very dear ought it to be to his people? Indeed it forms the basis of all communicable grace and glory. For without union, there can be no communion. Unless married to CHRIST, we have no claim to maintenance or dower? Unless grafted into this holy Vine, how shall we derive sap or fruitfulness from the Vine? It is by virtue of this oneness with CHRIST, in the eternal purpose of JEHOVAH, being chosen in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, that the Church derives all her blessedness from CHRIST. This union is the foundation of all the after blessings, which arise out of it. All the blessings and mercies we derive from CHRIST, in this time-state of the Church, are the result of the Church's being considered as one with CHRIST, from all eternity. So that our redemption by CHRIST, is among the blessed *effects* of this union: and our union with CHRIST is the *cause.* CHRIST came to redeem his Church, from the ruins of the Adam-fall. But this was, because JESUS hath betrothed himself to this Church, before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. Hosea ii. 18.

But while we esteem so very highly this union, on account of the blessings flowing from it: (and never can it be too highly prized, or too often meditated upon,) I would desire the Reader to observe, that the union itself is as far superior, as any *cause* is to the *effect.* An union with CHRIST, makes a child of GOD one with CHRIST. It forms a personal union: for the whole Person of CHRIST, GOD-MAN is one with his Church, in every individual member of it: body, soul, and spirit. *He that is joined to the* LORD *is One* SPIRIT. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Hence CHRIST is precious: not only for his gifts, or for his graces, or for his benefits; but for himself. He is not only the source of happiness, but is himself our happiness. Not only gives his people life, but is himself their life, and their portion for ever. So sweet and precious therefore, is this conscious union with CHRIST.

Secondly, JESUS saith, that *the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.* Here also we discover a blessedness, which merits our

highest regard, and our unceasing thankfulness. There is a glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in his divine nature as GOD, one with the FATHER over all blessed for ever. But then this is not communicable, neither was it ever *given to him.* And there is a glory, even a Personal glory, as GOD-Man, which is his, and incapable also of communication. And there is a glory of dignity and merit, as GOD-Man, which he hath acquired by virtue of his sufferings, and death. Philip. ii. 6—11. Neither is this capable of being communicated. But his glory as Head of his body the Church, as the head of influence, and the head of communication; this glory, given to him by JEHOVAH, is purposely given, to be communicated to all the members of his mystical body; and JESUS here saith, he hath given it to his people. And it is most blessed to observe, how the LORD is for ever doing it, here in grace, and above in glory! And the oneness of the Church of CHRIST with CHRIST, is such, that while the Church is made everlastingly blessed and happy in her Head and Husband, JESUS is made glorious in his Church, and becomes as the Prophet described her, *a crown of glory in the hand of the* LORD, *and a royal diadem in the hand of her* GOD. Isaiah lxii. 3.

Thirdly, It is not the smallest part of CHRIST's regard, which he hath shewn to his Church in this prayer, in the striking discrimination which he hath made, between his Church and the world; and the knowledge his people have of him, compared to the world. *O righteous* FATHER, (said JESUS) *the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee: and these have known that thou hast sent me.* There is somewhat very particular and striking, in CHRIST calling the FATHER, in this place, and upon this account, *O righteous* FATHER! Was it not (for I only ask the question, without deciding upon it,) to shew the righteousness and strict equity of GOD, in leaving the world shut up in the unbelief of their own minds by the fall, and revealing himself in CHRIST, to all the Church; chosen in CHRIST, and called? Rom. xi. 7, 8. Reader! do not fail to mark this as you pass over the several parts, of this most precious Chapter. And while you mark it, look to GOD the SPIRIT, to cause the sweet savor of it, to rest with suitable affection, to call forth praise and love in the mind.

I will only detain the Reader just to observe, with what tenderness and love the LORD closeth the whole of his prayer, with an intimation of continuing to declare unto his people the Name of his FATHER; that the love of GOD to CHRIST, as GOD-Man Mediator: and the love of GOD to the Church in CHRIST, might be unceasingly known and enjoyed, by his whole household. It is impossible that any thing could be said more expressive, in token of the LORD's love. He was now in the moment of separation from them. When he had finished his prayer, he was going into the garden of *Gethsemane.* JESUS knew what would then follow. This was the last, the farewell interview, of CHRIST and his eleven Apostles alone. And what were his last words in this sweet season. That *the* FATHER's *love wherewith he had loved him, might be in them; and I* (said JESUS) *in them.* Here was an assurance then, of the everlasting love of JESUS, and the sameness of love in JESUS to his Church, to the end of the world. That love could not increase, neither could it diminish. JESUS leaves his heart with them therefore, and not only them, but all the Church, of which they were then the representatives. That his love shall be

with them; and constant, fresh manifestations, and discoveries of it, shall be for ever. So the LORD JESUS declared. And so his people in the present hour of the Church, can bear witness; and *set to their seal in having received this testimony, that* GOD *is true.* John iii. 33. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! do thou, with uplifted eyes, and thankful heart, behold thy GOD and SAVIOR, in this most blessed representation the HOLY GHOST hath made of him, in this Chapter, here entering upon His High Priestly Office; and through faith, come under the golden Censer of his Offering! Oh! what a sample hath he here given, of his all powerful, all prevailing, and unchanging Priesthood. Yes! thou blessed LORD! let my poor soul, I pray thee, never lose sight of *the Pillar and ground of the truth,* on which thy Church, in all her members, both Apostles and people, stand everlastingly firm and secure; the perfection of thy finished work, and the faithfulness of JEHOVAH'S word and oath, in the Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure.* It is indeed eternal life, and it is thy office-character, to give it, to know JEHOVAH, the only true GOD; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; and JESUS CHRIST, whom JEHOVAH hath sent.

Oh, ye Apostles of CHRIST! what unspeakable mercies did JESUS, in this sweet prayer, confer on you! And ye no less, whom in all the after ages of the Church, GOD the SPIRIT hath called to the ministry; how are ye all, from age to age, included, in this rich priestly blessing of my GOD! Oh! for an holy jealousy, over the fold of CHRIST, in all the under pastors of the Church; to see and know that their commission is of GOD. JESUS! in mercy to thy Church, grant that none may run unsent; but that all may bear with them, the same sweet testimony as JESUS in this address to his FATHER gave, concerning his Apostles: *As thou hast sent me into the world; even so have I also sent them into the world.* Oh! the blessedness for all of this description and character, to have a consciousness of being interested in CHRIST'S prayer; from being sent forth to the ministry from CHRIST'S ordination: HOLY FATHER! *keep through thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are!*

And no less ye whole Church of CHRIST! Never, never, lose sight of those most precious words of JESUS, when he said; *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Yes! thou dearest LORD! though thou hast given *some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers:* yet the whole is for *the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of* CHRIST. Thy little ones dearest LORD, are as dear to thee, as the greatest and the best; for all is derived from thee, and none hath ought, but what he hath received from thee. Precious LORD JESUS! the hour is hastening, when that will of thine will be fully accomplished; and from an everlasting Oneness of thy Church and People with thyself, the whole Church will appear as thou hast said: 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!* Amen.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *is here in the Garden of Gethsemane.* Judas, *with the Band of Soldiers, apprehend* CHRIST. *He is arraigned before* Pilate.

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

I detain the Reader at the very entrance on this Chapter, in order to beg his attention to what the Sacred Writer hath said of this brook *Cedron*, or *Kidron*. It is evidently the same as that mentioned, 2 Sam. xv. 23. And as *David*, in passing over this brook in his distresses, was clearly a type of CHRIST, it merits our attention the more. Some have thought that the name of *Cedron*, or *Kidron*, which signified *black*, was given to it because it lay in a dark valley. And others conclude, that its name was taken from the black and foul waters which ran into it from the temple sacrifices. In either sense, the gloominess of it, and the filth of it, rendered it loathsome. And if, as is supposed, the prophetic Psalm concerning CHRIST had an eye to this brook when it is said, that *he should drink of the brook in the way*, Psm. cx. 7. it may serve to lead the mind to some very solemn and interesting reflections. Here it was that the good king *Josiah* caused the polluted vessels of the temple to be burnt. 2 Kings xxiii. 4. And all the uncleanness found in the house of the LORD in *Hezekiah's* reign, was carried here. 2 Chron. xxix. 16. JESUS passing over it, and drinking of the brook in his way, may not unaptly be supposed to represent the filth and blackness of sin, in which CHRIST as our representative appeared. And his drinking of it might be supposed to refer to the cup of trembling, which, as the Church's Surety he drank to the very dregs, that his people might drink the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. Isa. li. 22. Psalm cxvi. 13.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

It is sweetly said, that JESUS oft-times resorted thither with his disciples. Yes! no doubt the LORD had enjoyed many blessed hours in communion with his FATHER in this hallowed spot. And no doubt had oft refreshed his faithful Apostles in it with his divine discourses. Here then, where CHRIST in his human nature had received the richest consolations, shall he now sustain the bitterest conflicts.

And as in a garden his Church in her Adam-nature fell under the temptation of the devil, so in a garden will JESUS begin his triumph over hell, to take his Church out of the hands of Satan. *Judas*, it is said, knew the place. No doubt had often heard, in common with the other Apostles, the LORD's heavenly discourses there. But what discourses of heaven, and heavenly things, can affect the minds of them *who are earthly, sensual, devilish?* Reader! depend upon it, if all the damned in hell were liberated from their chains, no other mind would they have, but what would be still hellish. And if the devils were permitted to change their place, there would be no change accomplished by this of their nature: devils they would still be. Nothing but a sovereign act of grace could alter their mind. And this we are told will never be accomplished. They are reserved, scripture saith, *in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* Jude 6.

Of this awful character *Judas*, I have said so much already (John xiii.) as to render it unnecessary to enlarge in this place in adding to the account. But I cannot forbear observing, in this miserable man's history, to what a desperate degree of hardness the mind of man, under hellish influence, is capable of arriving. It is very evident, from the relation which follows in this Chapter, that when the band of soldiers fell to the ground at the voice of CHRIST, *Judas* must have fallen with them, for the Evangelist is express in noting, that *Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.* Reader! pause over the trembling account. Here were chief priests and Pharisees, Roman soldiers and officers, and *Judas* the traitor, all standing together in conspiracy against the person of CHRIST. Now, I humbly ask, were not these the different heads and representatives of all the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST? The chief priests and Pharisees were the representatives of the Jewish church. The Roman soldiers of the Gentiles. And both were prophesied to join hand in hand to the death of CHRIST. See Psm. ii. And what was *Judas?* Was he not the awful representative of all the reprobate? Jude 4.

I must not pass away from these verses, without first noticing the circumstance of this band of armed men coming to apprehend CHRIST, *with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.* What was this for? In all probability it was moon-light, being full moon according to the season of the Passover; yet, as if to make sure of their object, they bring lights with them, as well as weapons. *Judas*, their leader, no doubt had told them of some of CHRIST's miracles, and therefore they used every precaution. But, if the Reader will attend to what is related in the following verses, he will discover how the LORD rendered all these circumstances, (as he did indeed every other) to minister to his own glory, the joy of his Church, and the confusion of his enemies. Luke iv. 28—31. John vi. 15.

4 Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*, if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 Then the band, and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

It is not wonderful that the *Roman* soldiers should have been ignorant of CHRIST's person, for they little regarded the Great Redeemer of mankind, unconscious of their need of one. But that the chief priests and Pharisees, and especially *Judas*, should not instantly have recognized CHRIST, is astonishing. Some have thought that the LORD for the moment struck the whole party with blindness, as the angels at Lot's house struck the *sodomites*, before that the LORD struck them to the ground. Gen. xix. 11. But be this as it may, certain it is that somewhat overawed the whole company, and probably it was a large one, if, as some suppose that the *Chiliarch* (who in verse 12 is so called) commanded not less than five hundred men.

But I pass over this, and indeed every other consideration, to call the Reader's attention to two grand points here presented to our contemplation. *First*, the promptness of JESUS to meet his enemies, in going to them unasked. And, *Secondly*, the miracle which he wrought in smiting them to the ground. Of the *first*, I shall have occasion to speak more particularly in the succeeding verses. And of the *second*, I will only beg to observe, that, according to my apprehension of things, this was the greatest miracle that we have upon record, produced by apparently the slightest exertion of CHRIST's power. Reader! figure to yourself an army of soldiers, with weapons, falling backward to the earth only at the simple words of JESUS, *I am!* And then ask your own heart, Who but GOD could have wrought such a miracle! How was that prophecy of the Psalmist concerning CHRIST fulfilled, *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes*

came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Psm. xxvii. 2. And how blessedly also was that prophecy of *Isaiah* accomplished, which he spake concerning this *stem of Jesse, and the Branch which should grow out of his roots,* when it was said of him, that *he should smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he should slay the wicked.* Isaiah xi. 1—4. Oh! how easily might the same breath which cast them to the ground, have cast them into hell! And, Reader! do not overlook how graciously the same words of JESUS which minister comfort to his people, prove destructive to his enemies. See Isaiah lviii. 9. Matt. xiv. 25—33. For when at any time the LORD speaks graciously to his own, it is for the most part in making himself known unto them. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you. Then thou shalt call, and the* LORD *shall answer: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, here I am. It is I, be not afraid.* See Isaiah li. 12. Isaiah lviii. 9. Mark vi. 49, 50. So that the very presence of the LORD, and the manifestation of that presence, which confounds the LORD's enemies, comforts his friends; yea, the very same words, according to the manner in which the LORD speaks them, give life, or destroy.

When the Reader hath duly pondered these things, I would beg to call his attention to what I before glanced at in these words and actions of CHRIST, in the promptness of JESUS, in going forth to meet his enemies, and voluntarily surrendering himself into their hands. JESUS *knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, whom seek ye?* Now the voluntary surrender of himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of his Church and people, is among the grand events of the whole business, and therefore I more earnestly request the Reader's attention to it.

And for the proper apprehension of it, we must look back, according to the scriptural account of these transactions, to the everlasting covenant, *ordered in all things and sure,* in which the Almighty Covenanters engaged before the foundation of the world. We are too apt to begin the subject of CHRIST and his Church, at that part of it which concerns the redemption of the Church; whereas, in truth, this is but the consequence of things, and not the first chapter in this wonderful volume of GOD! CHRIST, and his Church, were set up from everlasting. And for the time-state of the Church, the LORD JESUS, as the Head and Husband of his Church, volunteered from all eternity to come and deliver her from the ruin of the fall, which in the Adam-nature, in which she was to be born, in common with the whole Adam-race, it was foreseen she would be involved. And hence we hear CHRIST, by the Spirit of prophecy, ages before his incarnation, saying, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required; then said I, Lo! I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my* GOD; *yea, thy law is within my heart.* Psm. xl. 6, 7, 8. Now the freewill offering of CHRIST as a sacrifice, constituted the principal feature in the merit of it. So that we find, no sooner doth scripture open to the Church the subject of redemption, and proclaim the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the High Priest, the Altar, and the Sacrifice, but we discover also, in the same Scriptures, the voluntary will and freeness of the LORD JESUS, in giving himself a sacrifice.

I must not, in a work of this kind, amplify pages in bringing a selection of scriptures to this point, in proof at large. But I earnestly request the Reader to consult those I refer to. They may be classed under their several heads. *First,* what the Scriptures relate of these things, in CHRIST's willingness to offer himself a sacrifice for his Church, before the foundation of the world. See, in confirmation, Psm. lxxxix. 19—29. Prov. viii. 22 to the end. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. *Secondly.* The further relation of those things from the first dawn of revelation, and before CHRIST openly tabernacled in substance of our flesh. Every service under the law ministered to this one end, and every type and shadow had no other object but in allusion to *the one offering of the body of* JESUS CHRIST, *once for all.* Heb. x. 10. In proof of this the whole Jewish dispensation might be brought forward, and the whole code of prophecy also. See Psm. xxii. and Psm. lxix. Isaiah liii. Zech. ix. 11. *Thirdly.* When the Son of GOD appeared, and came to accomplish the full purposes of the covenant, every act of CHRIST, before the time arrived for his sufferings and death, most fully proved that his entire consent was in it. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me,* said JESUS, *and to finish his work.* John iv. 34. *Wist ye not that I must be about my* FATHER's *business.* Luke ii. 49. Yea, *the zeal of the* LORD's *house* is said *to have eaten him up.* John ii. 17. So that every thing indicated how exceedingly his heart was engaged in this work. Jer. xxx. 21. And perhaps as striking an instance in proof, as ever could be given, was the reproof he gave to *Peter,* who, from his love to JESUS, when the LORD was foretelling his disciples of his sufferings, cried out, LORD, *be it far from thee! Get thee behind me, Satan,* (said JESUS,) *thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things which be of* GOD, *but those that be of men!* Matt. xvi. 21—23. See the Commentary there. From all which appears the earnestness with which the LORD looked forward to this great event of his sacrifice and death, as the delight of his heart. He engaged in it from all eternity. And in time, no sooner had his Almighty hands, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, created the world, than he began to shew forth, in types and sacrifices, his redemption of the world; yea, he is said to have been *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,* because every offering shadowed forth the offering of his body once for all. Rev. xiii. 8. Heb. x. 10. And, *lastly,* to mention no more: the freeness and willingness with which CHRIST here came forward from the garden, to give himself up to the band of men and officers, becomes a full confirmation of the whole. He who struck to the ground the whole band, could have delivered himself from them for ever; but, as he himself said, *how then would the Scriptures have been fulfilled, that thus it must be.* See Matt. xxvi. 50—54. If the Reader wishes to consult more scriptures in proof of the voluntary offering of CHRIST, and the LORD's delight in the prospect of his death, he may turn to Luke ix. 18—22. and 51. Matt. xx. 20—28. Luke xii. 49, 50. John ix. 4. John x. 17. John xiii. 27, 31, 32.

I beg the Reader's particular notice to the wonderful authority of CHRIST, expressed in these words, in the very moment of surrendering himself: *If, therefore, ye seek me, let these* (meaning his disciples) *go their way.* I humbly conceive, that JESUS spake not as a matter of request, as though he begged it as a favor for his disciples to be at

freedom to depart; but a command, they shall go their way. *Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* Psm. cv. 15. And, surely, if his overruling power had such sway in the safety of others, how much more, had it pleased the LORD, might he have exercised it for himself. I mention this as an additional testimony of the free-will offering of CHRIST, in which, beyond all doubt, consisted the infinite value of his sacrifice. And what a very sweet and comfortable thought ariseth out of this view of JESUS, thus giving his disciples a safe deliverance through the midst of their enemies. Surely he standeth round about his people now, as much as then. *The* LORD *knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* 2 Pet. ii. 9. When the Prophet's servant in the Mount, found himself surrounded with the horses and chariots, even a very great host, sent by the king of *Syria* to take prisoners, the Prophet and his servant, the poor distressed follower of *Elisha*, cried out, *Alas! my master, how shall we do?* But how different did he view things, when, at the Prophet's prayer, the LORD opened his eyes, he saw a mountain full of horses of fire, and chariots of fire, encircling them both around for protection? 2 Kings vi. 14, &c. So was it with the disciples of JESUS, in the hour here described. The presence of JESUS was a wall of fire round about. Zech. ii. 5. So is it now, and ever hath been, and will be in all ages of the Church. There is a suited grace, a suited strength in CHRIST, for every occasion. And when faith is in lively exercise, a child of GOD finds himself enabled to fetch all *from* CHRIST, and to live wholly *upon* CHRIST. *I can do all things,* said Paul, (and so may every child of GOD say the same, when the LORD the HOLY GHOST quickens to the act of faith,) *through* CHRIST *which strengtheneth* me. Philip. iv. 13. 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

If I detain the Reader one moment longer on this very interesting passage, it shall be only to remark to him the very great preciousness in the accomplishment of our LORD's prayer, respecting the safety of his people. The LORD JESUS had just before declared to his FATHER in that prayer, (see John xvii. 12.) that he had lost none of all that the FATHER had given him. And here the Evangelist records a blessed instance of it, so immediately upon accomplishment. Surely so sweet a proof, and so graciously handed down to the Church by GOD the HOLY GHOST, ought to be had in everlasting remembrance. For what is here said of the Apostles, holds equally good to all the Church of CHRIST. Not one of them whom the FATHER hath given to the SON can be lost, either in time or eternity, either body or soul, for both are equally the FATHER's gift, and equally united to CHRIST, and equally beloved by GOD the HOLY GHOST. And it would be well if every child of GOD, from so remarkable an instance as this before us, would take comfort from it against all the exercises he may meet with in his own life. And though *Peter* seemed for the moment to have made it doubtful by cutting off the ear of one of the party, yet even this act of violence on the Apostle's side called forth no resentment from them on their's. A plain proof of the restraint JESUS had over the minds of all that came against him, and, by the way, no small proof also of his divine nature in the act. So that the whole forms a very blessed instruction, and of comfort to all the children of GOD, in all ages of the Church, and I venture to hope that my Reader will not lose sight of it. John vi. 39. Heb. ii. 13.

Of the binding of CHRIST, which as a sacrifice became highly proper, I have already dwelt upon, Matt. xxvi. 57. But, in addition to what was there offered, I would request the Reader to connect with it the wonderful coincidence of circumstances, which arise from the view of CHRIST, as a free-will offering. To bind Him, who by the breath of his mouth cast to the ground the whole party of soldiers, and who could have commanded a legion of angels to attend his divine person, how mysterious it appears! And yet, so it must be. His divine nature is proved from the omnipotency he manifested; and the binding him, as another *Isaac*, as fully demonstrated that *he was crucified through weakness*, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. and both together confirm the wonders of his person; CHRIST *crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks,* CHRIST *the power of* GOD, *and the wisdom of* GOD. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple; that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? he saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

I have before noticed in the former Evangelists, some of the leading circumstances concerning the wearisome and painful walks of JESUS, from the Garden to *Annas*, and from *Annas* to *Caiaphas*, to Pilate, and to Herod, to which I refer. But there are several very weighty things connected with this view of the LORD JESUS, when led as a lamb to the slaughter, that merit our closest attention, and which, in this place, I would beg to propose to the Reader's notice.

It was according to the law of sacrifices, that the Children of Israel should present them first to the Priest, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And probably this with a view, to see, that the thing offered had no blemish. I beg the Reader to turn to Levit. xvii. 1—9. in proof. Now though *Annas*, and *Caiaphas*, were both silent as to the spotlessness of CHRIST, yet the HOLY GHOST so ordered, that JESUS should not be led away, without this testimony: and therefore *Pilate*, in passing sentence, shall declare the LORD's innocency. See Matt. xxvii. 24, 25. What a very blessed proof this is, of CHRIST, the great Sacrifice. Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 17, 18.

And while we are taking this transient view of the LORD JESUS, in the presentation before the High Priest, as a spotless sacrifice, it may not be amiss to connect with it another; namely, that when led away to slaughter, and bound with the sins of his people; so here again there was a correspondence, in being led without the camp, and suffering without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12. *He was taken from prison and from judgment*, the Prophet said, when *the* LORD JEHOVAH *had laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah liii. 6. 8. Surely the wonderful correspondence of those things with the types of old, could not have had such an exact fulfilment, but from GOD the HOLY GHOST, watching over his Church, and arranging the whole to the LORD's glory, and to the joy of his people.

In relation to the following of CHRIST, by *Peter*, and another disciple; I do not think it necessary to enlarge. Whether this other disciple was *John*, as has been generally supposed, or not, cannot be a point of great consequence to seek to know, since the HOLY GHOST is silent upon it. I confess I should rather think that it was not *John*, or either of the Apostles; but rather one of those many private disciples we read of, John xii. 42. For *John* was of *Galilee*, as well as *Peter*, and therefore his speech would have betrayed *John*, as well as *Peter*. Neither is it likely that *John*, a poor fisherman of *Galilee*, should have had much acquaintance at the High Priest's palace. But be this as it may, it cannot be important to determine; since the HOLY GHOST hath not explained.

But in relation to *Peter*, it was among the overruling providences of the LORD, that he should follow CHRIST at this memorable hall, because here was to take place that event, of his denial of CHRIST, and that grace of JESUS towards him, in his recovery from so awful a fall, as hath proved in the Church of CHRIST, and will prove until the whole Church is brought to heaven, a subject of the deepest teaching of man's nothingness, and CHRIST's all-sufficiency. See Luke xxii. 31.

I pray the Reader to remark what is said in this scripture of the fire in the hall, kindled to warm the servants, and of the coldness of the night, which made it necessary. And yet this was the selfsame night, and but a few hours before, when JESUS sweat the bloody sweat, under the burning heat of his agony in the garden. Reader! what must the sufferings of the GOD-MAN have been, when in the open air, in a garden, and in a night of extreme cold, the LORD was thus exercised, when within a hall, full of company, as it should seem, a fire was kindled to give warmth to the people!

19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine?

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? he denied *it*, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

John is the only Evangelist which hath recorded this examination of CHRIST. And the drift of it was, if possible, to discover somewhat more particularly concerning what they deemed blasphemy. See Deut. xiii. But though they wished to make this in some measure a cover with the people, yet, as they desired above all things to bring CHRIST under the *Roman* power, in order that he might be crucified, and not stoned, as was the punishment for blasphemy, they only designed this examination as preparatory to the bringing him before Pilate. Hence we find, according to the account given by *Luke*, (chap. xxiii. 1, 2.) that their charge against CHRIST before Pilate was, that *they had found him perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself was* CHRIST, *a King*. There is nothing said of blasphemy; this charge would have thrown back CHRIST upon them, to be judged at their tribunal, which of all things they studied to avoid. CHRIST must, according to their wishes, be turned over to the civil power, and in this case, crucifixion must be the punishment.

And here I just detain the Reader to remark how the LORD overruled their minds to confess the very reverse of what they intended. First, by declaring that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, according to the Roman custom, for sedition, whereby they confessed that the prediction of the Patriarch *Jacob*, when he lay a dying, was fulfilled, *the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet*, and consequently *the Shiloh was come*. Gen. xlix. 10. *We have no king* (said they) *but Cæsar!* John xix. 15. Reader! do not fail to ponder well these things!

28 ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgement: and it was early, and they themselves went not into the judgement hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgement hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? and when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all.*

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

It appears from the earliness which is here spoken of in hurrying away JESUS to the hall of *Pilate,* that the *Sunhedrim* must have sat up all night. Oh! with what blood-thirstiness did those men hunt after the death of JESUS? Reader! do not fail to observe, amidst the misgivings, fears, and alarms of those wretched characters, both Jews and Gentiles, how sweet the testimony JESUS gave to his person and character. *Art thou a King?* saith Pilate to him. *Thou sayest that;* (said CHRIST,) *I am a King.* But not *of* this world, though *in* this world; here in grace, hereafter in glory. Oh! sweet and blessed assurance from the lips of truth. And, as the LORD here said, he bears witness to the truth, for he himself is truth. John xi. 6.

And, Reader, do not overlook the spiritual instruction which ariseth out of the Jews' preference of a robber to JESUS. You and I have robbed GOD of his glory, and our souls of happiness: and yet how are we released at the Passover, when CHRIST, our Passover, hath been sacrificed for us, while CHRIST is by wicked hands crucified and slain? Oh! thou Lamb of GOD! truly thou hast borne our sins, and carried our sorrows! And how often have thy people preferred sin and vanity, as those Jews did *Barabbas* of old, before thee, the LORD of life and glory.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! Gethsemane! sacred, hallowed spot! Did JESUS oft-times resort thither with his disciples? And wilt thou now, O LORD, by thy sweet Spirit, aid my meditations, that I may take the wing of faith, and often traverse over the solemn ground? It was a garden in which the first *Adam* began to break through the fence of GOD'S holy plantation. And in a garden the second *Adam,* so called, shall begin the soul-travail of sorrow, to do away the effects of it. And, oh! what humiliation, what agonies, what conflicts in the arduous

work? Oh! how vast the glory, when smiting to the earth his enemies, the LORD JESUS proved his GODHEAD by the breath of his mouth! Sweetly do I see thee, LORD, by faith, going forth a willing sacrifice. Lo! I come! said JESUS. So come, LORD, now, by grace!

Hail, thou King of Zion, for thou hast here most blessedly borne testimony to this glorious truth. Then as a King do thou reign and rule over thy Church, thy people, both in heaven and earth. And let my soul continually discover *the goings of my* GOD *and King, in his sanctuary*. Surely, dear LORD, it is thine, both by nature, providence, grace, and glory, to maintain and order, to regulate and appoint, to establish and confirm thy royal laws, and the government of thy kingdom, in the hearts and minds of all thy people, whom thou hast made willing in the day of thy power! Reign thou, and rule in me, the LORD of life and glory! Amen.

CHAP. XIX.

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The LORD JESUS *is here scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked. He is crucified. He giveth up the ghost. His burial.*

THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Every thing in relation to the LORD JESUS CHRIST is interesting, and merits our closest regard. To a child of GOD, whose eyes are opened to behold in some measure or degree, the wonderous things of GOD's law, here is a subject, which at every step we take, shews us yet more and more, how the LORD was carrying on his own design, and they who were the actors of it, the most unconscious creatures what they were doing. What could *Pilate* mean by scourging JESUS? Some say it was with a view to soften the minds of those savages, who pushed him on to exercise an unjust sentence against CHRIST, at which his own conscience revolted. I cannot say that I think so. He was a mere instrument in my view to do that, which all along had been determined by JEHOVAH to be done, to fulfil that scripture in relation to his Church; *By his stripes we are healed*. Isaiah liii. 5. And the soldiers, what did they do? Certainly, they had no consciousness what they were about, when they

put the thorny crown upon his divine head, and clothed him with the purple robe. But here they literally fulfilled what GOD had said in the curse: *Thorns and thistles* the earth was to bring forth to the man. And here CHRIST the GOD-man, as if to shew his pre-eminency in suffering as in glory, shall be crowned with them. Gen. iii. 18. Coloss. i. 18. And they bow the knee in mockery as they meant, but in reality fulfilling the prophecy; for JEHOVAH had said ages before, though the kings of the earth, like *Pilate* and *Herod*, and the rulers, like the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Pharisees, are all agreed against the LORD, and against his CHRIST; yet in the very moment of their most violent outrage, the LORD then sets his King upon his holy hill of Zion. For never was the kingly office of CHRIST more blessedly shewn than in that day, when those soldiers said, *Hail, King of the Jews!* and *Pilate*, the unjust judge was compelled to declare, that in Him he could find no fault. Sweet and precious testimony from the mouth of an enemy, to the holiness of CHRIST! Psm. ii. 1—6.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgement hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: who-

soever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cesar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgement seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King?

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him;* crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cesar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led *him* away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

I beg the Reader to notice with particular regard, his Redeemer coming forth with his thorny crown and purple robe, his sacred body lacerated with stripes, and the blood streaming in every direction, and ponder well the cause. Isaiah, ages before, proclaimed the cause, and here the history confirms it; *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.* Isaiah liii. 5. Without an eye to this, as the surety of his people, how impossible would it be to reconcile the wonderful appearance on any principles of common justice. But, beheld as the Sponsor of his Church, and what a ray of light shines at once upon the whole, to explain the cause, and to endear such love to every heart.

If the Reader will read with attention the first verse in this paragraph, he will perceive, that in our translation it is said, when JESUS thus came forth, *Pilate saith, behold the man!* But if he observes, the name of *Pilate* is in Italics, by which is meant that the word is not in the original. And though I do not mean to speak decidedly upon the subject, I venture to think that it ought not to be there. For if it be supposed, that it is JESUS himself that saith, *behold the man!* it would be in conformity to the analogy of scripture. In the Old Testament CHRIST is introduced as calling upon his Church in like manner; *Behold me! Behold me!* Isa. lxv. 1. *Look unto me, and be*

ye saved. Isaiah xlv. 22. And GOD the FATHER proclaims him to the Church in like manner, and bids the people to behold him. Isaiah xlii. 1. with Matt. xii. 18. And so doth GOD the HOLY GHOST. John i. 29, 36. Hence, therefore, when the LORD JESUS came forth before the high priests and rulers, having *given his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,* as the Prophet described him, CHRIST calls upon them *to behold the man!* And their cry at the sight of CHRIST to crucify him, becomes a yet further confirmation of this prophecy, which said, that he would be *despised and rejected of men.* Isaiah liii. 3. LORD! grant to me grace to eye thee with that melting look described by the prophet, until the whole heart goeth out in desires after thee, and every affection is awakened into love to thee. Zech. xii. 10.

I stay not to make long remarks upon the conduct of *Pilate.* It would keep us from higher subjects. But, it is interesting in some measure to observe, what different passions of fear and guilt, and the contending conflicts of this man's conscience, operated upon his mind. But I more particularly request the Reader to keep in view that most precious answer of the LORD JESUS, when after long silence, he reproved the unjust judge for his insolent assumption of power, which he said he had, either to crucify CHRIST or to release him. *Thou couldest have no power,* said JESUS, *at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* JESUS looked over the heads of all his foes, to eye the hand of JEHOVAH in this appointment. And, Reader! it would be always well for you and for me, and for all the LORD'S people to do the same, in all the lesser considerations we meet with in life. See Gen. xlv. 7, 8. Acts ii. 23.

On the subject of CHRIST bearing his cross, I have already taken notice in the former Evangelists, to which therefore I refer.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross, and the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

There is somewhat very striking and well worthy of our regard, in the title which *Pilate* wrote and put on the cross of CHRIST. I will beg to detain the Reader while I propose an observation or two upon it.

It appears from history, that it was the custom of the *Romans,* when at any time inflicting capital punishment, first to proclaim the

name and crimes of the person going to suffer. Sometimes this was done by an herald going before the culprit to the place of execution, and sometimes by publishing his name and crimes over his head, that all passing by might read. And in all those cases, it was done with a view to justify the sentence, and to make known the equity of the *Roman* nation and character.

In this instance of our dear LORD, there are *two* points which are more particularly deserving our notice. The first is, that the Inscription on CHRIST's cross was the very reverse of what they intended, for it confirmed both CHRIST's innocency, and proved by their own confession what JESUS had claimed; *This is the King of the Jews.* And the other is, that *Pilate* himself who had passed sentence of death upon JESUS for the claim, now confirmed it with his own hand. And no sooner was the thing done, than some of the more knowing ones perceived the oversight, and begged *Pilate to alter it.* But the LORD who compelled *Pilate's* hand thus to honor CHRIST, and write his own *mittimus* of condemnation, restrained his heart from allowing any change. *What I have written,* (said he,) *I have written.* And this positiveness in such a character as *Pilate* is the more wonderful, who had before shewn such a changeable, fearful, and irresolute mind. Reader! think of it, and behold how the LORD thus overruled the whole to vindicate CHRIST's innocency, to proclaim his royalties, and to have his name published in the three great languages of the chief part of the then governing world. The Hebrew tongue being the language of the Jews, the Greek of the Gentiles among the greater parts of the earth, and the Latin the ordinary dialect of the *Romans.* What but the predisposing power of the LORD could have induced all these things? And who but must see the divine hand in the whole?

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

We cannot but be led to make similar observations of the overruling power of GOD, in respect to the soldiers casting lots for one of CHRIST's garments, and dividing the other into four parts, for each soldier a part. How should such an exact fulfilment of prophecy have taken place, and which was delivered at least a thousand years before, had not the LORD who gave the prediction, watched over the accomplishment, and predisposed and gave a direction to

every thing leading to the end of it? The very words were minutely fulfilled; *They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.* These things therefore the soldiers did!

Just let me add, that there seemeth somewhat very emblematical in these garments of JESUS. Infidels, like these soldiers, may, and will take a part of CHRIST, some that are infidels respecting his divine nature, and some that call in question his atonement. They are willing to call him a Prophet and a teacher of morality, and one who died as a martyr to confirm these characters. But they desire but a part in CHRIST, and therefore rend the scriptures to this purpose. Truth, however, like the seamless coat of JESUS, in the lot of every one where CHRIST is given, is a compleat whole. It admits nothing to be taken from it, neither admits any thing to be added to it. A whole sinner needs a whole SAVIOR. CHRIST must be all, or nothing. And blessed are they who thus have the LORD for their GOD. So sung the Church, and such will be the song of every individual of CHRIST's body. Isaiah lxi. 10.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home.*

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

We have within these verses, as recorded by this Evangelist, only *Three* of the last words of CHRIST on the cross. But, from the corresponding history of the crucifixion, as related by the other Evangelists, there were *Four* others, and all particularly striking and important. It is a very usual thing among men to treasure up the last words of dying friends, as being more than ordinarily ponderous and meriting regard. Those of the LORD JESUS must surely be eminently so. I would beg in this place, as *John* is the last of the Evangelists, and who closeth the history, to gather them into one point

of view, and as far as we can well form our judgment with correctness, to look at them one by one, in the order in which we may suppose the LORD delivered them.

It is worthy our observation, that *three* of those last sayings of CHRIST on the cross, were addressed to the FATHER, and *four* to those around him. But, like his farewell prayer in the midst of his Apostles, the greater part had respect to his Church, and not to himself. See John xvii. The first in point of order, seems to have been that in which JESUS said, FATHER *forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luke xxiii. 34. Was not this, (I ask the question,) as in the LORD's High Priestly Office, now entering upon it, as on the great day of atonement? The Cross his altar, himself both sacrifice and sacrificer, his blood streaming over his sacred body, his wounds as the incense of his censer, and his dying sweat ascending as the burnt-offering before GOD? And in this manner, his arms extended, as the High Priest his type in the temple was stretched forth to bless the people; so JESUS when he cried out, FATHER! *forgive them, for they know not what they do!* Reader! were you and I included in this prayer? It is a grand enquiry. Let us pause over it, and ponder it well.

The *second* voice of JESUS heard on the cross, was this, which is recorded by *John* in this place. These words of CHRIST in their first meaning, should seem to have had an especial regard to the disposing of *Mary* after the LORD's death, but I humbly conceive somewhat of higher moment was intended by JESUS, and in relation to his whole Church and people. For, surely, the temporary care of this woman might have been provided for in a less public way. It would hardly have been left to this hour. Neither would the HOLY GHOST, one might be led to suppose, have thought it necessary to have made such a special record of it among the last weighty sayings of the dying JESUS. But, as I have often in the course of this humble work observed before, so here again I desire to say, that I do not presume to speak decidedly. I venture to think that the LORD had higher motives in view, than merely recommending *Mary* to the care of *John.* And might it not be, (I ask the question,) to remind *Mary,* and in her his whole Church, when he said, *Woman, behold thy Son!* what the angel had announced to her before the incarnation of his name and glory, as JESUS a Redeemer, and when in consequence she called CHRIST her SAVIOR? See Luke i. 26—47. And when the LORD said to *John, behold thy mother!* was not this intended no less to correct, and reprove, all those honors which the LORD knew the idolatry of the future ages of the world would produce, in ascribing to *Mary,* whom CHRIST always called Woman, unsuitable and improper names?

The LORD's answer to the cry of the penitent thief on the cross, we may, I think, without the danger of misplacing in point of order, consider as the *third* voice of JESUS in those solemn hours. And, oh! what a number of the richest contemplations arise out of those gracious words of CHRIST. LORD! *remember me,* said the dying malefactor, *when thou comest into thy kingdom! And* JESUS *said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise,* Luke xxiii. 42, 43. I must not allow myself to enter into the sweet and almost endless subject those words lead to. But just let me re-

mark, what rich, free, unmerited, unlooked for, boundless grace, was here shewn by CHRIST, to a poor perishing sinner? What wonders hath JESUS here at once opened of the invisible world; and the instant possession of paradise, and JESUS with it, by every spirit when departing the body, in the faith and enjoyment of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness? And what a most effectual silence doth it give to the ungracious and unbecoming pretensions of all self-righteous Pharisees? How sweetly were the Apostle's words proved in this instance, and how suitably to be applied to every other; *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the* HOLY GHOST, *which he shed on us abundantly through* JESUS CHRIST *our* SAVIOR. Titus iii. 5, 6.

The *fourth* words of JESUS on the cross, were remarkable indeed, and full of the highest import. The LORD of life and glory had hung upon the cross full three hours, when he uttered this dolorous cry: *Eli, Eli,* (or as Mark renders it, *Eloi, Eloi,* for both are the same, Mark xv. 34.) *lama sabachthani, which is, being interpreted, My* GOD! *my* GOD! *why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 46, 47. The first three of these words are Hebrew, and the latter *Chaldee* or *Syriac.* We have the same word in the Chaldee paraphrase of the Psm. xxii. 1. So that CHRIST here fulfilled that prophecy, and the application of it was plainly seen to be to Him, and to Him only.

It is impossible with our scanty faculties, to fathom the depth of this wonderful cry of CHRIST. One thing, however, is very plain. The forsaking which the LORD speaks of, could not mean that that union of GOD and man in One Person was in the smallest degree lessened, for death itself could not accomplish this. In CHRIST dwelleth for ever and uninterruptedly, *the fulness of the* GODHEAD *bodily.* Col. ii. 9. Neither had he lost the favor and love of JEHOVAH, for that also was, and is, impossible. But, if one may venture to offer a conjecture on a subject of such a deepness in mystery, probably it might be for the time, the LORD'S having lost an enjoying sense of that favor, which all along before he had possessed. And as JESUS was now sustaining the whole weight and burden of the sins of his people, he felt what those sins merited; and was therefore for a space, as one deprived of the refreshing presence of JEHOVAH, that his people might not be deprived of it for ever. Reader! think, if the beloved SON of GOD was thus exercised, and sent forth such an heart piercing cry at the apprehension of divine withdrawings; what must be the shrieks of the eternally miserable who have lost the gracious presence of GOD for ever?

The *fifth* voice we hear from our LORD on the cross, seems most probably to have been that which *John* hath noticed, (verse 28.) when he said, *I thirst.* I say most probably this might be according to the order in which the LORD spake, for I am not able to determine. Neither is it I should suppose material. But what I think of more importance is what *John* hath said concerning it, that JESUS *knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.* The fulfilling of the scripture, was in reference to that prophecy of CHRIST, Psm. xxii. 15. where the LORD is described as brought into the dust of death; and where, according to another prophecy, vinegar is said to be given to him.

Psm. lxix. 21. The soldiers who gave CHRIST the offered vinegar were unconscious what they did; but how precious are such things to a child of GOD? And what was implied in this thirst of JESUS? Not merely a thirst of body, but of soul. An holy thirst to see all the whole purposes of his soul-travail, and sufferings, and death, accomplished in the salvation of his people. Reader! JESUS thirsted for his chosen. And shall not you and I thirst after Him? Oh! for a vehement thirst as one of old expressed, when he cried out, *As the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee O* GOD! Psm. xlii. 1. Song viii. 6.

The two last cries of CHRIST upon the cross, are those related by *John* and *Luke*. Perhaps the former was that which *John* hath recorded, for he saith, *when* JESUS, *therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished.* And *Luke* adds, *when* JESUS *had cried with a loud voice, he said,* FATHER! *into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost,* Luke xxiii. 46. It should seem, therefore, that it was in this order the LORD thus spake. But I presume not to determine. However, the words themselves are the same, in whatever manner they were delivered; and they are full of the highest import and richest consolation. Redemption-work was finished; and all the purposes for which CHRIST made his soul an offering for sin, were fully answered. The SON of GOD, therefore, in our nature, as a mighty conqueror retiring from the field of battle, having gotten himself the victory, cried out with a loud voice; not as one whose strength was consumed, but as One who laid down his life, as he had said, that he might take it again, and no man taking it from him, (John x. 17.) it is finished. And now committed himself into his FATHER's hands; as if to teach all his redeemed how to die in faith, and to whom *to commit their souls* in a dying hour, *as unto a faithful Creator.* 1 Pet. iv. 19. Psm. xxxi. 5. Acts vii. 55, to end.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

35 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his re-

cord is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

The preparation here spoken of, was, I apprehend, that which was usual for the sabbath, see Mark xv. 42. and this was still more highly esteemed, being a sabbath in the passover season; and added to these, it was the sabbath in which all the people presented themselves before the LORD. Levit. xxiii. 10, &c. And the law allowed none to hang on a tree until the night. Deut. xxi. 22, 23. But what is most worthy our observation, and indeed the HOLY GHOST hath put his divine emphasis upon what is here recorded, in the preservation of the bones of CHRIST unbroken, (as his mystical body forms a compleat whole, and never to be broken,) and the side of JESUS pierced; thereby fulfilling at once two memorable prophecies. See Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. Psm. xxxiv. 10. Zech. xii. 10. Rev. i. 7. See also John iii. 5. and the commentary upon it. And I beg to detain the Reader with a short observation more on the words of *John*, in quoting the passage from Zech. xii. 10. If the Reader will compare what *John* here saith with the words of the Prophet, he will find, that in the prophecy, JEHOVAH is speaking of himself; and therefore saith, that when he hath poured upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; the consequence, saith the LORD, shall be, that they shall look upon *me*. Whereas *John* records the fact, and is, therefore, only the historian to prove the correspondence. But, Reader! do not overlook that *He* who predicted and promised these things was JEHOVAH; (indeed who less than JEHOVAH could so foresee and so promise,) and that JEHOVAH is JESUS. Nothing can be more plain and palpable. And how was the whole yet further accomplished, when at the day of Pentecost, as JESUS promised his disciples, he sent the HOLY GHOST with these tokens? Luke xxiv. 49. John xv. 26, 27. Acts ii. 33—41.

38 ¶ And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation *day;* for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

I do not think it necessary to enlarge on the circumstances relating to these honorable men. But in addition to what hath been offered by way of note in the history of it, as recorded by *Mark* and *Luke;* I would just observe, that the interment of the body of CHRIST became a most important service, both as it proved the reality of his death, and as it confirmed the types and prophecies concerning him. Isaiah xxvi. 19. Psm. xvi. 9, 10. Matt. xii. 38—40. And as the life of the Church in her recovery from the Adam-nature fall, ariseth out of the assurance, that CHRIST by his death had destroyed death; so the reality and certainty of it became a momentous article of the faith in CHRIST. It was necessary CHRIST should die, to do away sin and death by the sacrifice of himself. It was as necessary that he should be *buried,* that his humblings might be compleat. The LORD had said by the spirit of prophecy a thousand years before; *thou hast brought me into the dust of death.* Psm. xxii. 15. And it was necessary, that though he died as one under the hands of justice, he should have an honorable *funeral,* and therefore, though his body was forfeited; yet to fulfil the seemingly contradictory prophecies, in which it was said, *he is taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living;* yet, contrary to all human probabilities, *he should make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;* Isaiah liii. 8, 9. these godly men, *Joseph of Arimathea,* an honorable counsellor, and *Nicodemus,* a ruler of the Jews, should arise to perform this office. And, as all these things were done by his death, his burial, and the honorable nature of it to fulfil those grand purposes; so his resurrection which followed, arose out of all those circumstances. JESUS must conquer death by his own death. He must go into the grave to subdue the power of the grave. And he must arise from the dead, in proof that he hath triumphed over both death and the grave in their own territories, and shewed the way to all his followers, how they are by virtue of their union with him, and communion in all that belongs to him, secured in all the blessings of his resurrection. So interesting an article of our holy faith, becomes therefore the certainty of CHRIST's burial; and blessed be GOD, who hath made such ample provision in the scriptures to ascertain its reality.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! never give over thy meditations of this unequalled subject! Follow the footsteps of thy LORD from place to place, the hall

of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, from Gabbatha to Golgotha, and through all the painful process of the wonderful sights exhibited on that memorable day, and hear the voice of thy LORD at every one; *Behold! and see! if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the* LORD *hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!*

But do not barely contemplate the astonishing scene, but meditate the cause. Read the inscription on the cross. *He was wounded for our trangressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed!* Matchless love! The SON of GOD becomes man that man might become a son of GOD. JESUS the HOLY, harmless, undefiled JESUS, is made sin who knew no sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.

From the cross let my soul in holy meditation follow the LORD to the tomb. And why not hear the same voice as the holy women did, which said, *Come, see the place where the* LORD *lay.* Never, surely, did the grave receive such a Prisoner, though but for a short space! Never had death and the grave their full triumphs, when in the same hour their empire received a full overthrow. Precious JESUS! thou hast the keys of death, hell, and the grave. Oh! for grace frequently by faith to visit the garden and the tomb where the body of JESUS hath lain. Here let my soul meditate the wonderous subject, until He who hath the key of David, opens my little spot and grave to receive my body. Even now I hear the voice of consolation, *blessed are the dead which die in the* LORD!

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

The LORD *appeareth to* Mary Magdalene. *Afterwards to his Disciples.* Thomas *doubteth the Resurrection of* JESUS, *is convinced of the Truth of it, and expresseth his Joy.*

THE first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together; and the other dis-

ciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in,* saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Part of three days, agreeably to scripture prediction, the LORD lay in the grave. On the third day he arose, and the events induced by it in the minds of his people, are first recorded. The sepulchres among the Jews were roomy places, so as to admit of the entrance of several at a time, being as some are described, four cubits by six. This explains what is said by *Mark*, that they entered into it, Mark xvi. 5. But what is most to our purpose, is to consider the very great backwardness in the whole of our LORD's company of disciples, both men and women, to the belief of CHRIST's resurrection. Nothing can be more certain, than that they had no apprehension what the resurrection from the dead should mean. *They knew not the scripture* it is said, that is, they had never considered the subject. And although the Old Testament scriptures had in a great variety of places spoken of it, both by prophecy and by figure, and JESUS himself had more than once taught it, yet their only views of CHRIST had respect to a kingdom of this world, and not the smallest apprehension of another. So that the surprize of *Mary Magdalene*, and *Peter*, and *John*, going to the sepulchre at her wonderful account was evident, yet we find it excited consternation for the present only, and all except *Mary* soon returned again unto their own home. See Hosea vi. 2. James ii. 17. Matt. xii. 40. xvi. 21. and xxii. 23—32.

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the

one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? she saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

There is somewhat particularly interesting in this short account of *Mary* still waiting at the sepulchre. So attached was she to the Person of JESUS, that, though she had no hopes of ever seeing him again, and convinced that he was not there, yet still she waits in silence, weeping with great sorrow, and still looking in, not knowing how to leave the sacred spot. And is it not so with waiting souls now when they miss JESUS where before they have found him; and though ordinances, and hearing the word preached, or reading it themselves in dark seasons, do not bring such sweet views of CHRIST as in times past; yet can they not go away from the means, but will be sending forth the anxious enquiry like the spouse of old; *Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?* Song iii. 3.

It doth not appear that *Mary* felt any fear at the surprizing sight of those angels in white, which she saw in looking in again to the sepulchre. One might have been led to suppose, that though her grief was great, yet such a supernatural appearance would have alarmed her. Neither did their address, as it should seem, affect her with any concern, for she answered their questions as though they had been men. And when she turned herself about, perhaps at hearing the footsteps of JESUS, and beheld JESUS without knowing him, we do not read of any of that alarm, which at such a place, and upon such an occasion, might have been reasonably expected. No doubt, agreeably to that sweet promise, *as thy days, so shall thy strength be;* the LORD who was so near her, strengthened her mind with suitable firmness. And so we may conclude the LORD doth by all his people. Many sweet instructions arise out of this short scripture. You see the LORD may be, and, as in this instance, certainly is, very near his redeemed, when they like *Mary* are very unconscious of his presence. And you observe, that the first discovery of JESUS, as here, must begin on the LORD's side; for otherwise, like her, our eyes will be holden, we shall not know him. And I pray the Reader to observe yet further, that however earnest we are at any time in seeking JESUS, the LORD is still before-hand in seeking us. For it is not only one of the most precious truths of our charter in grace, *if we love him, it is because he hath first loved us;* but it is a blessed promise of the same divine covenant, that before his people at any time call, he answers. 1 John iv. 19. Isaiah lxv. 24.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she, supposing him to

be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father: and *to* my God and your God.

This is a most interesting account of the first interview of the LORD JESUS with his redeemed, after he arose from the dead. *Mark* seems so struck with the gracious act, that JESUS should make choice of this woman to have the first sight of his person, when coming forth out of the other world, that he hath made a special record of it. *He appeared first,* (said he,) *to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils,* Mark xvi. 9. As if to say, mark the astonishing grace of JESUS! All his redeemed shall know him; but that precious child of his whom Satan hath most worried, shall have the first love token of JESUS.

I pass over the relation, beautiful as it is, to read of *Mary's* supposing JESUS to have been the gardener, and her request to JESUS under the then unconscious state of her mind; I pass over these things to call the Reader's attention to matters yet of higher moment, in our LORD's gracious condescension to this woman. And I pray the Reader not to forget in the whole of what is here said to connect with it, that the humblest and poorest of JESUS's little ones, are as much interested in the account as *Mary* was herself. Surely JESUS made choice of this woman purposely to impress this upon his Church. Who could be apparently further from the LORD, than one in whom seven devils had raged and reigned? And yet who could be dearer to the LORD, when this woman is chosen before the whole college of Apostles, to have the first sight and conversation with a risen and triumphant JESUS? Reader! do not forget this.

How JESUS manifested himself to *Mary* when calling her by name, and what a look or gesture, or special token of his Person accompanied that call, may be supposed, but is not capable of being described. How doth that dear LORD now in numberless instances, though not in a visible form, manifest himself to his people otherwise than he doth to the world? But what must have been the first feelings of *Mary's* heart, when she discovered that it was JESUS. The name by which she addressed CHRIST is very striking, *Rabboni*. And if, as some say, that it is never made use of but when speaking of GOD, it is indeed very precious. We know that *Rab*, though a name of great dignity, was always in use among the Jews after their return from *Chaldea*, for it is a *Syriac* word. And our LORD's direction to his disciples concerning it, may serve to throw some light upon the sub-

ject. Matt. xxiii. 7—10. *Rabboni* is the plural also of *Rab*, and as such must certainly be considered very different from the common acceptation of the word when used in the singular. And as it is allowed by all to be of higher import than *Rab*, or *Rabbi*, I confess that I am inclined to accept it in this place, (and which is the only place we find it used in the whole Bible,) as the full confession of *Mary* to the GODHEAD of CHRIST. Struck by such a palpable testimony of his eternal nature, in his resurrection from the dead, she hailed him *Rabboni!*

The LORD's answer to her comes now to be considered. JESUS *saith unto her, touch me not.* By which we are to understand, not that the LORD would have objected to this token of her affection, for we find that soon after the LORD made *Thomas* put his hand into his side, (verse 25.) But this was not the moment for *Mary* to be so employed. The LORD had a message to send her upon to his disciples. It was time that they, as well as herself, should receive the joyful tidings of his resurrection, and therefore he would first send her to them. *I am not yet ascended to my* FATHER. As if he had said, there will be time enough before my return to glory, to grant both to you, and to them, many an opportunity of indulging all in those desires; but for the present, hasten *to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my* FATHER, *and your* FATHER, *and to my* GOD, *and your* GOD. See Mark xvi. 7. There is somewhat uncommonly precious and blessed in those words of the LORD JESUS. GOD was CHRIST's GOD and FATHER, in a way perfectly distinct from every other, as CHRIST, that is, GOD and Man in One Person. For, when the SON of GOD took into union with himself that holy portion of human nature, and became the Head and Husband of his Church, he put himself, as Mediator, into those relations, as Servant of JEHOVAH, and Surety of his Church. So that in this view, GOD, that is, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, is both the GOD and FATHER of CHRIST, as such; and the GOD, and the FATHER of the Church in CHRIST, by adoption and grace. All which differs from the eternal relationship which subsist between the persons of the GODHEAD, and in which there is a perfect equality, by whatever names the persons in the GODHEAD are distinguished, in nature, and in essence, and in all divine perfections and glory.

In addition to the observations already offered on this first appearance of CHRIST, after he arose from the dead, and the message sent to his disciples, see Mark xvi. Luke xxiv. I would in this place only beg to remark, that those immediate manifestations the LORD JESUS so graciously made of himself at his resurrection, were evidently intended, (and it will be the highest wisdom of the Church so to accept them,) as the most decided proofs of his unalterable love to his people. Death had made no change, either in his nature, or in his affection. He was the same JESUS after his resurrection as before. For although by that death he had for ever put off all the weaknesses of nature, in the bodily wants of hunger, and the infirmities of weariness, and the like; and in his resurrection, which became the first act to glory, he arose suited for the everlasting enjoyment of heaven, yet, both in nature, and in relations to his people, there was not the smallest change.

And, in confirmation of this, the message the LORD sent by *Mary*,

as well as the one his servant the angel sent in his name to his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 7. become an high proof. Surely, if there had been a moment in the life of CHRIST, when we might have been tempted to think the LORD would resent the perfidy of his disciples, who all forsook him and fled, it would have been then. Whereas the very first act of JESUS, after he arose from the dead, and before he entered into glory, was to appear to *Mary*, and suffer her not to pause over the mercy before that she had communicated the blissful tidings to his disciples. *Go, tell my brethren! He is not ashamed to call them brethren*, said one of the sacred writers, Heb. ii. 11. though they had all been ashamed of Him! Oh! matchless love, unequalled grace!

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

It should seem, that the message of the LORD to his disciples by *Mary*, was to prepare them for this most gracious visit of their risen SAVIOR. And what a refreshing and soul-satisfying visit must it have been! We hear no upbraidings for their late desertions: nothing of reproach, but all love. Moreover, in the shewing them his hands and his side, these were not merely by way of proving the reality of his resurrection, and the identifying his person, but of shewing them also those tokens of redemption which he was going with to heaven, that would everlastingly plead for them there. The LORD had said in his message by *Mary*, that she should say to his brethren, *I ascend unto my* FATHER, *and your* FATHER, *to my* GOD, *and your* GOD. So

that in my ascension, those marks will openly appear for you. And all the petitions you send after me, I will put into my pierced hands and side, to ensure the acceptance both of your persons and your prayers. Reader! if the disciples were then glad when they saw the LORD, are not all his disciples made joyful now, with every spiritual view which the LORD manifests to them of himself, in their public or private assemblies?

The peace which the LORD JESUS pronounced over them, was a confirmation of what he had said at his farewell discourse. See John xiv. 27. And the breathing on them, evidently intended as a communication of suited grace and strength for their spiritual necessities. (See John xv. 4. and Commentary upon it.) It could not mean the work of *regeneration*, neither the *ordination* of them to the ministry. For the *former*, no doubt, had been accomplished before; and the *latter* was to be the especial work of GOD the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost. Luke xxiv. 49.

It is truly lamentable to behold the abuse which some have made of what the LORD JESUS at this time said, in relation to the remission of sins. And it is yet more awful what errors designing men have caused to spring from it. The Apostles wrought miracles, as they were appointed, in confirmation both of the Gospel, and their authority as Ministers of it; but we never read of either of them exercising power to forgive sins. Indeed, they knew better. It is GOD alone (as the Scribes and Pharisees justly in that instance, reasoned,) who can forgive sins; and CHRIST, as GOD, exercised it. (See Mark ii. 2—12. and Commentary.) But in whatever sense the LORD intended the words, either in the remission of sins, or the retaining of them, it should seem to be very clear, that no such power as hath been supposed was ever given. Certain it is, that when by the preaching of a full, free, and finished Gospel, under the HOLY GHOST's influence, sinners are awakened, regenerated, and made new creatures in CHRIST; their sins are forgiven. And, as *faith cometh by hearing*, CHRIST's ministers, in this sense, may be said to remit sins. Romans x. 17. And on the contrary, where that Gospel is thus proclaimed, and not mixed with faith in them that hear it, there the sins are retained. Hence *Paul's* observation, of being *a sweet savor*, both *in them that are saved, and in them that perish*. Heb. iv. 2. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

24 ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 ¶ And after eight days again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. *Then* came

Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

We are not told the cause for which *Thomas* was absent at the first interview of JESUS with his Apostles, after he arose from the dead. But whatever cause it was, had not CHRIST's grace been greater than *Thomas's* deservings, never could he have been recovered from the daring unbelief, into which through temptation he had fallen. How rash his declaration in determining not to believe, except he had such evidences, as, humanly speaking, there seemed no probability to obtain! How gracious an act in JESUS to grant it! But how came *Thomas* to know that there were nails driven into the hands of JESUS, or that his side had been pierced? He was not present at the crucifixion; for he, in common with the rest, forsook JESUS and fled. And sometimes bodies were fastened with cords instead of nails, on the cross. But the truth was, that *Thomas* was for the time given up to unbelief, that the Church might thereby receive the more ample testimony, in his otherwise unaccountable obstinacy to the conviction of the truth of the resurrection of JESUS. Reader! do not overlook the precious instruction which this view of *Thomas's* incredulity gives to the whole Church of CHRIST. *Thomas* had been present at the resurrection of *Lazarus*. And such a demonstration of the power of CHRIST might have taught the Apostle that CHRIST was able to raise himself. But here *Thomas* lost all confidence. And what is any man unless supported by the power of GOD! Oh! what cause have we every day to cry out with the Apostles, LORD! *increase our faith!* Luke xvii. 5. But what a glorious confession did *Thomas* give, when JESUS in his boundless compassion had granted him his demand? Reader! do you not pray for grace to have the same, and not only to know CHRIST, both LORD and GOD, but to know him, and say as *Thomas* did, *My* LORD, *and my* GOD! Acts ii. 36.

It doth not appear that JESUS manifested himself to any but his disciples after he arose from the dead. Neither to them, but now and then, during the forty days in which he remained on earth. But what a gracious account the Evangelist gives, when he saith, that both his appearing, and the record of those appearances, were purposely for the confirmation of the faithful, that, *in believing, his whole Church might have life through his name.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! you behold the privileges of GOD's people. JESUS will reward the humble waiting of his redeemed who seek him. They who went early to the sepulchre, and *Mary*, who remained there, at length had their full portion of the sight of JESUS. And now, what is it but the same? They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.

And what a very precious encouragement is the first appearing of CHRIST to *Mary Magdalene!* She had the first view of JESUS. As if to comfort every poor sinner, that *where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound.* That soul in CHRIST's family shall have the first glimpse of JESUS, the first kiss of CHRIST, who most needs him. Precious LORD! let all thy Magdalenes, where Satan hath most cruelly wounded, be first healed!

Oh! dearest LORD JESUS! deal by the *Thomas's* of thine in the present hour, as thou didst by the Apostle of old. Thou knowest of the sin which doth so easily beset us, and thou knowest the cause. Oh! thou great and Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! keep thy redeemed from the sin of unbelief. LORD! *give us to believe, and help thou our unbelief!* Amen.

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS *renews his Appearance to his Disciples at the Sea of* Tiberias. *He feeds his Disciples: gives a particular Charge to* Peter. John *ends his Gospel.*

AFTER these things, Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself.*

It seemed by the close of the foregoing Chapter, as if the Evangelist had then ended his Gospel, the last verses having all the appearance of a conclusion. But it is our mercy that GOD the HOLY GHOST directed the mind of the beloved Apostle to go on, and add this sweet Chapter, for it is indeed a sweet one. It is not said what an interval there was between the former manifestations the LORD JESUS made of himself, and this here recorded; but we are told in a subsequent verse, that this was the third time the LORD had been so gracious. See verse 14.

2 There were together, Simon Peter, and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael, of Cana, in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

If the Reader counts over the number here said to be together, he will find it to be *seven*. No doubt, all upon the look out for the renewed visits of the LORD JESUS. And as those here spoken of, were now at the borders of the sea of *Galilee*, which is the sea of *Tiberias*, see John vi. 1. it is evident that they were come here from Jerusalem in obedience to CHRIST's commands, and as the LORD had promised, to see him. Matt. xxviii. 10, 16.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account. And the plain and artless representation of the history is much more beautiful, than had the account been dressed up in all the pomp of language. The want of success in those fishers, and the LORD JESUS early in the morning standing on the shore, formed a blessed occasion for the manifestation of his person and grace, which were to follow. When the LORD is about to reveal himself to his people, how graciously he sometimes prepares the way for the greater display of his love!

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? they answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

It is rather surprizing, that when JESUS called to them by so tender a name, and which was the very same words, *little children*, as he had used before, (see John xiii. 33.) that they had not immediately discovered who it was. But this was reserved for the miracle which he added, and which produced the effect. I pray the Reader to notice, from all these tender incidents of the LORD JESUS, how near his heart his people are. He saith now as much as then, *Children, have ye any meat? Cast on the right side, and ye shall find.* If we are backward to seek our spiritual sustenance from him, JESUS will be found of them that seek him not. And how often doth JESUS make himself known by his gracious acts, as here to *John*, when outward revelations do not always effect it. Is not the LORD known by his providence, and by his grace, in numberless instances where we least expected him?

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three. And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of his disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

The first manifestation the LORD made of himself, in proof who he was, he shewed in calling them by the tender name in which he had so lately spoken to them, and following this with causing them to enclose a multitude of fishes. And now, as soon as they step on shore, they find immediate provision made for them in the same miraculous manner. Both instances could not fail to bring to their recollection, how JESUS, near the same spot, had fed the multitude in the wilderness, and gave them success also on the water. John vi. 1—14. Luke v. 1—11. Some have thought, and probably it might be so, that beside the supply those mercies gave to their present necessities, these things had respect to the Apostles' future ministry. And as those fishermen had caught nothing before they met with JESUS, so all labors in the word and doctrine are unprofitable without Him. John xv. 5. And as at CHRIST'S command their capture was so abundant,

so is it with all faithful ministers of salvation, when, at the direction of JESUS, and the presence of JESUS, they cast the net of the Gospel on the right side.

There is somewhat very sweet and gracious in the invitation of the LORD to come and dine. Though they knew him, and though JESUS had sufficiently shewn by such attention to them, that there was no alteration in his love towards them, yet, since the LORD was now come forth out of the invisible world, there was, no doubt, a certain somewhat in his aspect, which induced an holy solemnity in the Apostles. It must have been a solemn interview, though so highly gracious. The LORD's presence cannot but fill the mind with awe. A child of GOD will have the most lively sense of his own creature-ship and unworthiness, in those seasons when JESUS is giving out most largely of his love.

And was there not somewhat sacramental in this repast? JESUS took bread it is said, as well as gave to them. Precious LORD! how doth every view of thy tender words and actions, minister to the endearment of thy Person and Character?

The Evangelist saith, that this was the *third time* of JESUS shewing himself to his disciples after his resurrection. But he meant the third time in a public manner to the disciples in a body. For the LORD had shewn himself *five times*, before this. *First*, to *Mary* Magdalene. Mark xvi. 9. *Secondly*, to the other Women who went early to the Sepulchre, who at the command of the Angel, while running to tell the disciples of CHRIST's resurrection, were met by JESUS, saying, *All hail!* Matt. xxviii. 9. *Thirdly*, by the two disciples, in their walk to *Emmaus*. Luke xxiv. 13, &c. *Fourthly*, to the Eleven, as they sat at meat. Luke xxiv. 36, &c. And *fifthly*, the same day week after, when the LORD spoke particularly to *Thomas*. John xx. 26. But the Evangelist, by the *third time* meant the third visit to the disciples as a body. But *Paul* seems to intimate, as if *Peter* had been blessed with a visit and manifestation of JESUS alone, beside those which the LORD had granted him in common, with the other Apostles. For Paul, when speaking of CHRIST's resurrection saith, that *He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.* And I pray the Reader to observe, with what an air of triumph the Apostle adds, *after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom* (saith Paul) *the greater part remain unto this present.* As much as to say, if any of you doubt the fact itself of the resurrection of JESUS, you may enquire for yourselves; for they are alive and will inform you. *For this thing* (as Paul said on another occasion,) *was not done in a corner.* Acts xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. xv. 3—8. See Commentary also on that Chapter. And see for a testimony of the resurrection of CHRIST, by the HOLY GHOST's teaching. Acts xxv. 19.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 ¶ Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?*

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things which

Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

What a beautiful and interesting discourse immediately took place, as soon as the LORD and his disciples had finished their repast at this holy table. Oh! that the LORD's people had it frequently in remembrance. How truly blessed would it be if the tables of the LORD's faithful ones were thus closed: and when the imperious demands of the body had been satisfied; the soul was not suffered to go lean. Deut. vi. 67. Malachi iii. 16, 17.

I pray the Reader not to overlook, in this most interesting conversation of the LORD JESUS with *Peter*, the chief test JESUS put to him in proof of his sincerity, was love. The LORD doth not say; hast thou honored me or obeyed me, or what proofs canst thou bring of thy duties towards me; but simply, dost thou love me? And although the LORD repeated the question three times, which *Peter's* conscious heart, in his threefold denial, interpreted to have been the cause; yet it is not said, no neither is it at all intimated by the LORD JESUS, as if this was the cause, for which the LORD asked him thrice the question. Indeed I rather think, from the well known and long proved love and grace of JESUS to his people, that the LORD rather intended to give *Peter* the opportunity of thrice repeating the assurances of his love, to do away the impression of his thrice denial. The LORD knew from what cause *Peter* had fallen. And the LORD knew that his whole Church must have fallen from the same cause, did not his all powerful grace keep up, and preserve. It appears, therefore, in my view, one more of those numberless instances we have upon record, of the tenderness of JESUS to his people, that in those circumstances where they have shewn greater weakness, his grace may be the more manifested, in enabling them to shew greater love!

There is somewhat very blessed also in the LORD's giving the Apostle such firmness of faith; not only to assert his love, but to appeal to Him, who could, as GOD, read his heart, and knew that love to be there. Though *Peter* felt grieved, as it is said, at the *third* demand of JESUS, *lovest thou me?* yet I venture to think, it was but the grief of the moment. Yea, I am inclined to believe, that the Apostle afterwards rejoiced at it; when from being led into the mind of JESUS, he discovered the LORD's grace, and intention in it. This was the *third*, if not the *fourth time*, Peter had seen his LORD, after he arose from the dead: and not a word (as far as we know from the Gospel,) had passed between the LORD and his servant, on the subject of *Peter's* denial. No doubt the Apostle longed for an interview to tell JESUS of his shame, and to receive his pardon from the mouth of JESUS. And what then could be more satisfactory to *Peter*, than thus for JESUS to ask of him concerning his love; and in proof that the LORD knew the extent of that love, had committed to him the care of his Lambs and his Sheep.

I need not in this place enlarge on the subject of JESUS's charge to *Peter*. CHRIST himself is the great Pastor, and Shepherd of his flock.

And it is his province to feed them. For He is both the life and sustenance of all his fold; being the bread of life, and the water of life: and *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* But the LORD doth condescend to appoint under pastors, to feed his people with understanding and knowledge. And they are supposed as in this charge to *Peter,* to have respect to the different ages of his flock; to lead the sheep of the fold, and to regard the tender state of the lambs. But one great character JESUS points out, in his demands of *Peter,* as the first quality of a pastor, is, the love of JESUS. For whatever abilities of head knowledge they possess, the whole is nothing without this love of the heart.

In what follows of the LORD's foretelling *Peter* by what death he should glorify GOD, and the Apostle's curiosity to know what was to become of *John;* it were unnecessary to dwell. *John's* testimony to the truth of the Gospel, which bears his name, is more interesting to regard. And while he knew, that his testimony was true, and the Church then in being, knew the same; it will be blessed both to the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary,* if from the witness of GOD the HOLY GHOST in each of our hearts, we can bear a like testimony. 1 John v. 20. And while we bless GOD for this precious portion of his holy word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in CHRIST JESUS; we may truly say with *John,* that the world, yea, the whole creation of God, is not large enough in its bosom to contain all that might be said, if all were said of JESUS, since his riches and wisdom are unsearchable, and of Himself, as the sacred Writer hath expressed it, *there is no end of his greatness.* Psm. cxlv. 3.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED LORD JESUS! what praise, what thanks, what love, doth thy Church owe thee, dearest LORD, for the many repeated manifestations which thou didst so kindly shew to thy poor despised disciples, after thy resurrection from the dead. Miracles upon miracles: and grace for grace. Oh! let it teach my poor soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, from such striking testimonies as are here recorded, how very nigh JESUS is to his people, when they are unconscious of it. Yea, LORD! how much thou art watching over all their concerns, and providing, both for their bodily and spiritual sustenance, when they can provide for neither. Oh! for the grace shewn *Peter,* to comfort all the exercised members of CHRIST's mystical body. Oh! for faith, and love, to be able to appeal, as *Peter* did to JESUS, saying, LORD *thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee!*

Praised be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for all the revelations which JEHOVAH hath graciously made to the Church of GOD's dear SON. LORD! grant that all thy redeemed under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, may, with the disciple, *which hath testified of these things, and wrote these things,* be able to add, from their own assurance, and say, as the Church then did: *we know that his testimony is true.*

Farewell! for the present, thou beloved Apostle *John!* We hope to meet thy further records of thy dear LORD, and our dear LORD,

when we come to those precious writings of thine, under the inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which are in the same sacred volume. But here we thank thee, for thy labors in this Gospel, and for all the precious relations thou hast given, of CHRIST our LORD. And blessed, for ever blessed be He, that called thee to this service, in his Church. Shortly the whole Church of GOD will be called to see Him, in whose bosom the beloved Apostle lay, who wrote these things of his divine LORD. And then, all the redeemed with *John* will surround the throne, and sound their united praises, in one full hymn of thanksgiving, to GOD and the Lamb, for evermore. Amen.

THE END OF VOLUME I. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

W. Stratford, Printer, Crown-Court, Temple-Bar.