

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a beautiful view is here afforded, of the beloved Apostle in his Pastoral Office, addressing the faithful *Gaius*, beloved in the LORD. To behold the venerable saint of God, amidst all the infirmities of declining years, thus blessing God, and blessing the servant of God, in his wishes both for spiritual and temporal prosperity.

But while we look at *John*, who justly commands our veneration and our love, let us look infinitely above *John*, and behold *John's* LORD still blessing all his Church; and every *Gaius* of his redeemed family below, with blessings in himself. Precious, precious JESUS! we desire to praise thee for all that is lovely, in the disciple whom JESUS loved; for all that is lovely in *John*, was, and is derived from thee! LORD! hasten on thy blessed purposes, and bring on thy glorious day, when thou wilt come, *to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe!* To thee, LORD, it belongs, to keep thy Church from falling, and to present it faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding joy. In the blessed hope of thy appearing, may all thy Church in thee, and through thee, daily ascribe to FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, Israel's God in Covenant, endless praises. Amen.

THE
GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

J U D E.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

JUDE is particularly spoken of as the brother of *James*, perhaps to distinguish him from *Judas* the Traitor. For otherwise, it was more the custom to speak of the Jews by descent. *Jude* lived the last of all the Apostles, except *John*. And it could not be well less than *thirty* years after CHRIST's ascension, that he wrote this Epistle. He hath evidently followed the Apostle *Peter*, in his Second Epistle, and thereby confirmed the words of GOD, that, *in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established.* Deut. xvii. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 1.

The design of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in sending this Epistle generally to the Church, seems very evident from its contents. Heresies had at this time sprung up, and the Church was infested with them. It is our mercy, that *Jude* as well as *John*,

lived to see them. For under GOD the HOLY GHOST, we owe our possession of those blessed Epistles to this cause. And both the origin and support of heresies, we are expressly told, is, that the truth of GOD may be thereby manifested among us.

I have only to request the Reader, that here, as in all the former books of Divine Inspiration, we may enter upon the study of it with prayer, that we may end it in praise!

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

CONTENTS.

The Opening of this Epistle is truly sweet. Jude addresseth all he hath to say to the Church. It is to you, Beloved, Jude saith that he writes. He then, through the greater Part of the Chapter, points out the awful State of the Reprobate. But still it is to the Church he speaks of those Things, for their Consolation and Instruction. Towards the End, he points out the Safety and Blessedness of the Church, and concludes in praise.

JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

The opening of this Epistle is ponderous and full of glorious truths. The LORD give grace to his Church, to regard what is here said. *Jude* calls himself a servant of JESUS CHRIST, and he writes his Epistle to the Church of CHRIST. To whom should the servant of CHRIST minister, but to the household of his LORD? I beg once more, that this may be well noticed. I have all along, through the blessed Epistles we have passed; in this *Poor Man's Commentary*, particularly pointed this out to the Reader, that it is to the Church, and not to the world, the servants of our GOD and SAVIOR write. They, who would be supposed to have more mercy than GOD himself, are willing to overlook, or have not known this distinguishing character, of those holy writings of the Apostles. Let not the Reader. *Jude* writes to them that are sanctified by GOD the FATHER, and preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called.

If the Reader hath not forgotten the Apostle *Peter's* address, in his first Epistle general to the Church, in the opening of it, he will observe a beautiful correspondence to this of *Jude*; and which, as it shews what a oneness of heart those great Apostles had in divine truths, so will it no less prove to him, that both were under the same divine teaching. See 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. There is, indeed, a difference in the wording of those verses, by those Apostles; but the doctrine is the same. And the different expressions, if rightly considered, give a beauty and blessedness, to the grand truths they deliver and confirm. For, when we find the same divine offices and perfections, in one scripture, spoken of one of the Persons of the GODHEAD in another, ascribed to either of the other Persons of the GODHEAD, what are

these things, but so many collateral testimonies to the leading article of our most holy faith, 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.

In this blessed verse *Jude* ascribes to GOD the FATHER the sanctification of the Church. *To them that are sanctified by GOD the FATHER.* And, without all doubt, GOD the FATHER hath chosen the Church in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, that it should be *holy and without blame before him in love.* Ephes. i. 4. Nevertheless, the word translated in this verse *sanctified*; might have been rendered, (as is well known to the learned,) *beloved in and of GOD the FATHER*; which, in its meaning, more particularly refers to the electing love of GOD the FATHER. Similar to the sense of the same word, in relation to CHRIST, the glorious Head of the Church. *Say ye of Him* (said JESUS to the Jews) *whom the FATHER hath sanctified?* John x. 30. that is, whom the FATHER hath chosen? And this title of *Elect* and *Chosen*, as applied to CHRIST, is the greatest and most endeared in all the Bible, if we may judge by the manner of expression, in which GOD himself useth it. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth!* Isaiah xlii. 1. Hence by the Church, whom *Jude* here calls *sanctified* by GOD the FATHER, is meant, the chosen by GOD the FATHER, whom *Peter* calls a *chosen generation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and whom *Moses*, under the HOLY GHOST, stiles a *peculiar treasure to the LORD above all people.* Exod. xix. 5. Reader! pause over the view of the FATHER's everlasting love, in this special act of his, as it relates to the Church. It is from hence we date all our mercies. It is to this source, from the election of grace, and the being given to CHRIST, and chosen in CHRIST, that the Church *is kept by the power of GOD, through faith, unto salvation.* Hence, the Apostle to the Church: *We are bound* (said he) *to give thanks always to GOD, for you, brethren, beloved of the LORD, because GOD hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

The next point of doctrine we meet with, in this blessed verse, is, *and preserved in JESUS CHRIST.* Numberless blessed things are included in this comprehensive expression, *preserved in JESUS CHRIST.* Every degree of preservation is implied, as well *before* our being called to CHRIST, as *after.* For, as we are chosen in CHRIST, before the present time-state of our nature, are truly one with CHRIST, by his betrothing all his people to himself, when receiving them, as the gift of his FATHER, before the foundation of the world; so, there is a grace-union with CHRIST; by virtue of it, which all the members of his mystical body have; and whereby they are secretly, though mysteriously to us, preserved in him, and beheld as one with him, before their being in *Adam*, is brought forth in time. And though this preservation in CHRIST, doth not keep them, (because it was never intended so to do,) from falling, with the whole race of men, in the *Adam*-transgression, (and indeed, thereby, all the blessings of redemption arising out of that transgression, finds opportunity for exercise,) yet, it keeps them from the unpardonable sin, and from the second death; and it keeps them, in all the covenant privileges, made in the antient settlements of eternity, between the Persons of the

GODHEAD. Who shall calculate or write down, in the history of one child of God, much less the whole Church, the wonders of this preserving grace, in the ten thousand times ten thousand instances of it? Preserved *in* JESUS CHRIST, before called *to* JESUS CHRIST. Preserved in all the after stages of life, when called by grace, until grace is finished in glory. The Church in every individual member, may, and indeed ought, daily to ponder the melting subject; but we must enter eternity, and look back over the everlasting hills through all the path the LORD hath brought us on our way; before that we shall have a becoming sense, and apprehension, of the unspeakable blessings, contained in these four words, *preserved in* JESUS CHRIST.

And called! Here, though the blessed name of GOD the HOLY GHOST be not added, yet is it implied; because, in the œconomy of redemption, it is his peculiar office to call sinners *from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God.* The same Almighty SPIRIT, which in the *old creation of nature*, moved over the face of the waters, and said *let there be light*, is He, who in the *new creation of grace*, commands the light to shine out of darkness in the heart, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST.* Gen. i. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 6. And there is a beautiful order in all this, that the hand of each glorious Person of the GODHEAD is seen, in this great work of Covenant-love towards the Church. Turn to these scriptures in proof: Rom. viii. 29, 30. Ephes. i. 3—10. Titus iii. 3—7. And so infinitely blessed and important, is this great grace of the HOLY GHOST, in *calling*, that, until it is wrought, no child of GOD can have any apprehension, either of GOD the FATHER's love in *election*, or GOD the SON's grace in *redemption*. It is by *regeneration* that we are made *partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust!* 2 Pet. i. 4, 5.

Reader! let us not dismiss the view of those united mercies, before that we have paused a moment longer, to pay the tribute of praise, on our bended knees, to GOD, in his threefold character of Person, for those unspeakable mercies! Blessed for ever be GOD our FATHER, for sanctifying, setting apart, choosing, and electing the Church in CHRIST, before all worlds, that it should be holy and without blame before him in love! Blessed for ever be GOD the SON, for uniting the Church to Himself, in a oneness and union, preserving her before all time, and preserving through all time, his Church as his own, and redeeming her to himself, for his social spouse and companion, to whom he might impart all communicable grace here, and glory for ever. And blessed for ever be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for calling the Church with an holy calling, and by his regenerating grace, quickening her, when dead in trespasses and sins, and bringing her into a new and spiritual life in CHRIST JESUS! Blessed be the HOLY THREE in ONE, for all our mercies in time, and to all eternity. Ephes. i. 3, 4, 5, 6. Hosea ii. 18, 19, John xvii. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9.

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

I beg to detain the Reader at this verse, to observe to him, that these Apostolic greetings, ought not to be considered, as it is to be feared

they too frequently are, so many words of course. They are like so many prayers, as well as benedictions of the Apostles, and cannot be prized by the Church too highly. *Mercy* from the FATHER, *Peace* in and from JESUS CHRIST, and *Love* in and by the HOLY GHOST, very sweetly follow what was said before as the *fruits* and *effects* of those glorious acts, of the HOLY THREE IN ONE, in Covenant manifestations. Reader! it will be both your mercy and mine, if we find those daily fruits, in our daily bread, of the everlasting love of JEHOVAH to his Church in CHRIST! God, in his Threefold character of Person, is the fountain of all mercy, peace, and love. And sweet, yea, very sweet it is, when God the HOLY GHOST makes known these things to our joy; by his revealing them to us with his gracious influences, in *directing our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST.* 2 Thess. iii. 5. I would pray for those gracious love-tokens of the HOLY GHOST, that I may live in the enjoyment of the *mercy, peace, and love* of the whole Persons of the GODHEAD. But while I enjoy the *fruits*, I would pray yet more, to live upon the *Cause*. While I relish the *gift*, I would infinitely more love, and value the *Giver*.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

It hath been thought by some, (and I see no reason to disprove it,) that *Jude*, when he found his mind first directed to write to the Church, intended to have followed the same course as the other Apostles had done, *Paul and James*; and to have spoken *of the common salvation*. He had in view, to have dwelt principally upon those subjects which related to the Person, and glory, and offices, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. But that he found his mind over-ruled by the HOLY GHOST, to state rather to the Church, the things which belonged to the latter-day apostacy; and, in bringing before them the striking difference between God's chosen and reprobates, he might exhort them *earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints*. Whether this conjecture be right or not, I will not determine; but very certain it is, that the whole burden of this blessed Epistle is directed to this one purpose, in drawing the line, between the faithful and the ungodly. For, from the end of this verse, to the end of the *nineteenth* verse, the Apostle only speaks of the mockers of the last times, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts, and whose characters were of old ordained to this condemnation, being separate from the LORD's own people, *sensual, and having not the SPIRIT*. So that, if we take the Epistle into one view, after the exordium, from this verse to the end, the Apostle treats but of the *two* distinct classes of people; namely, the *Reprobate*, whose features of character he draws at large; and the LORD's *People*, who are *sanctified by God the FATHER, preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called*. To these latter, the Apostle, in a very blessed and affectionate manner addresseth himself, and closeth the Epistle. We will follow the Apostle through both. But, before

we go further, I would beg the Reader to consider, with me, what a strength of argument is in this verse, for every child of GOD to regard, what *Jude* saith of this holy, and earnest contention, for *the faith once delivered to the saints*. What that faith is, the New Testament, in the inspired writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles, most plainly, and fully shew. The great and leading doctrines of the Gospel, in the everlasting love of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, more or less, are in every page. The Person, glory, bloodshedding, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, with redemption only in his blood, and regeneration only by GOD the HOLY GHOST; these are the bottom, and foundation of all our mercies. To contend for these, and with earnestness, is to contend for the very life of our souls. An indifferency, or coldness to the open profession of these glorious truths in ourselves, or to the denial of them in others, is wounding the Redeemer, in the house of his friends. It is high treason to the Majesty of GOD. It is traiterously admitting the enemy into our citadel. I leave the Reader to his own thoughts, how far the present day is awfully marked with this character; when the general, yea, I had almost said, the universal plan of professors, is to coalesce, and not suffer mere points of doctrine, as they are called, to interrupt the common philanthropy of the times. What the Apostle *Jude* would have said, had he lived to have seen it, may be easily gathered from his earnest exhortation in this verse! And what GOD the SPIRIT, the Almighty Minister in his Church, always watching over it, shall judge, cannot be difficult to conceive!

4 ¶ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the

flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee,

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints,

15 To execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against them.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

I include the whole of this awful Portrait, though made up of different characters, under one view, because they all form but one and the same picture; and all come under one and the same condemnation. We shall do well, under GOD the SPIRIT'S teaching, to look both at their persons, and their features, and mark them one by one.

First. They are said to have been *certain men*, which had *crept in unawares*. By which we learn, that the Apostle is not speaking of men of the world among the infidels, who totally disown CHRIST; but certain men, which had crept into the *professing Church*; and therefore acknowledged him. *Paul* had foretold of such apostates, Acts xx. 29, 30: and *Peter* had drawn somewhat more fully their characters. 2 Pet. ii. 13. But *Jude* had lived to see some of them, in his day, as actually come into the professing Church; and, consequently, he foresaw swarms would follow. And I admire the expression, *they had crept in unawares*. For, as the faithful in the congregations, in those times, no more than in ours, had the faculty of discerning spirits, or of reading hearts, such false professors had got in, and been found among them: but then they *crept in*. Serpent-like, they had wormed themselves in, by wriggling: and, as *Satan* transformed himself into an angel of light, the more successfully to deceive; so those his ministers, for a while, appeared in form, as the ministers of righteousness, in a pretended love for CHRIST before the people. 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15. Reader! what a mercy is it in all ages of the Church, that the child of God, in whose heart a saving work of grace, by regeneration is wrought, hath this grand consolation for himself, amidst all the coverings of men, *the Lord knoweth them that are his!* 2 Tim. ii. 19. And it is an additional mercy, when, in proof of this, the child of God desires to be tried, and examined, and brought to the test, for the knowledge of himself, and his real character. And, fearing he may be tempted, from self-love, to judge too favorably of himself on this great point of decision, from the judgment of man, he flies to the scrutiny of GOD. *Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; look if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!* Psm. cxxxix. 23, 24. Here is a standard no hypocrite will have recourse to! This is a fire, and which no tinsel of unregenerated men can bear.

Secondly. Those certain men, which, the Apostle saith, had crept in unawares, appear to have been somewhat more than mere professors of the Gospel, among the people. It should seem, from the mention of certain characters, to whom they are compared, that they were the *Korahs* and *Balaams* of their day; *famous in the congregations, men of renown!* See Numb. chapters xvi. and xxii. &c. They blazed like Comets for a while, and like *wandering stars*, as *Jude* calls them, they soon went out, *to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* Hence, those strong expressions, as descriptive of their real character. *Clouds without water, carried about of winds.* No grace

of God in their heart. No work of regeneration upon their soul. A noisy profession only of a name to live, while virtually dead before God. Yea, *twice dead*; dead in the original state of nature, in the *Adam-fall* transgression in which they were born, and under the sentence of the *second death*, from having no part in the *first resurrection*. Observe the expression! *Certain men: and of old ordained to this condemnation!* Revelation xx. 6.

Thirdly. The Apostle hath drawn the outlines of their profession and practice. *Ungodly men, turning the grace of our GOD into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* I pray the Reader to observe with me, that here are no charges of immorality. Had their lives been notorious, for any breaches of the moral law, surely it would have been said, Moreover, as they had crept in unawares into the Church, had their conduct been notoriously corrupt, in any flagrant acts of licentiousness, they would soon have been discovered and turned out. But they are called *ungodly men*; by which term, it should seem, that their conduct was directly levelled against the truths of God. And indeed, the Apostle adds: *Turning the grace of GOD into lasciviousness.* By which, I apprehend, they presumed to charge the free grace of God, which bringeth salvation, with leading to lasciviousness; as if that grace countenanced evil; and that glorious plan, of God's own contriving, in pardoning freely, fully, and compleatly, the sinner, on the sole account of JESUS's blood and righteousness, was, (as modern enemies to the free-grace salvation of JESUS have charged the same,) opening the flood-gates of sin. This seems to have been their ungodliness, and for which they are condemned, as ungodly men. And, it yet appears the more probable, because it is added, that their turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, was also accompanied with *denying the only LORD GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* How could they be said to deny the only LORD GOD, but in denying his free grace? They could not be supposed to deny his Being. They could not, while they made a *profession* in the Church of CHRIST, either deny the Being of God, or the Being of CHRIST. But they indeed virtually denied both, if, like certain modern professors of Christianity, they denied the only LORD GOD, as existing in a threefold character of Person; and denied our LORD JESUS CHRIST in his GODHEAD, and in the efficacy of his blood and righteousness. Reader! look at this scripture in every way and direction in which it can be placed, and look for grace from the Almighty Author of inspiration, to have a right understanding of it. And then ask your own heart, what was *Jude* directed by the HOLY GHOST to give all diligence to write to the Church of the common salvation, unless to have guarded the minds of the faithful against the creeping in of such certain men as are here described? What faith but the faith of God's elect, in God the FATHER's everlasting love, and God the SON's compleat, and finished salvation, could the Apostle mean, when he exhorted the Church, *earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints?*

Fourthly. The judgments which are here threatened to such characters, bear an exact correspondence to the conduct, as I have described, under the former observation. When the LORD cometh, with ten thousand of his saints; he is said to come, to convince all that are *ungodly among them.* (Mark! here are the same characters as be-

fore called *ungodly men*, verse 4.) And he is said to convince them, not only of their *ungodly deeds*, but of all their *hard speeches*, which *ungodly sinners have spoken against him*. Who is this LORD, that is here said to come, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? For the FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON. And the reason is immediately subjoined. *That all men should honor the SON, even as they honor the FATHER*. John v. 22, 23. And all the parts of scripture which describe the day of judgment, speak of CHRIST the SON of GOD, as the Judge in that day. Matt. xxv. 31, 32. Acts x. 42. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. And who is to convince these men of their ungodly deeds, and ungodly speeches, but He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who, as the HOLY GHOST by Paul saith, *shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom?* 2 Tim. iv. 1. And who is this *Him*, which they are here said to have spoken all their *hard speeches against*, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Reader! ponder well the subject. Look at it again and again. Beg for light from above, to shine upon this solemn scripture, and to shine in your heart. Then look at the world, yea, the professing world, as it now is. Hear the hard speeches spoken daily against CHRIST, and by certain men, crept in unawares into the professing Church, and by a misnomer, calling themselves Christians. They deny his GODHEAD, deny the efficacy of his atonement, deny the merit of his blood and righteousness, and would fain reduce him to the level of a mere man, like themselves! Can your imagination conceive any thing more suitable, between the sin and the punishment here foretold to all such characters, than when JESUS shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, and by the overwhelming brightness of his Person, shall convince and confound, into everlasting paleness and horror, those awful men? Reader! do dwell upon the Apostle's words, concerning this tremendous judgment! *To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all, of their hard speeches*, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him: yea, against Him! Mark that!

Fifthly. There is one point more, which gives a satisfying account to the Church of God, respecting those men, in explaining the cause, wherefore, though they have crept in unawares into the Church, by profession, they are wholly void of the smallest possession, in respect to vital godliness; namely, they are *sensual, having not the SPIRIT*. Here is the discrimination of character, which, in all ages, ever hath, and to the end of the world, ever must, and will mark the feature, *between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*. Malachi iii. 18. Hence, all we read in this Epistle, yea, and all we read in the other parts of God's holy word, concerning men who are *sensual, having not the SPIRIT*; that is, who remain in the old *Adam*-nature of sensual corruptions, unawakened, unregenerated, and never quickened into a new and spiritual life by the HOLY GHOST, is in exact correspondence to what might be expected. *They speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. They have gone into the way of Cain; they have ran greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward; and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity. Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage.* These are different descriptions, like so many

shades in the painting; but all belong to one and the same character, of *sensual men, who have not the SPIRIT*: that is, all that are unregenerate. Not that all men while unregenerate, are like *Cain*, the first *Deist* the world ever had. For God's children, while in nature, are so. Neither that all unregenerate men hire themselves out, as *Balaam* did, to curse God's people, while conscious in his heart, that *Israel* was God's people. Neither do all, that with unhallowed hands dare to enter the Priesthood, as *Korah* and his company, uncalled of God, perish, as they did, in the moment of their presumption. Neither do all unregenerate men, who mingle in the feasts of God's people at his house, or at his table, though spots of defilement at those places bad enough; yet, neither injure the Lord's people, nor benefit themselves. Neither do all unawakened professors bolster up the *Pharisees* they meet with in their places of worship, though too often compliments to men's persons, whom they have in admiration, are paid, it is to be feared, at the expence of God's saving truths. These different shades, are differently seen in different men; but they all belong to one family, and have, in this respect, the same family feature; namely, as *Jude* saith, they are all *sensual, having not the SPIRIT*! Reader! pause once more, and ponder these things well. And observe, from the Lord's teaching, as plain and luminous, as though written with a sun beam; that regeneration, or the new-birth, is the only criterion, and standard of character, before God. All the flaming professions in the world, all the seeming zeal, in compassing sea and land to make one proselyte; all the high pretensions, of more love than God himself, to convert all the earth, and to save whom God hath not saved; all the alms-giving, and alms-gathering, for the innumerable societies, to manifest their possessing the milk of human nature; yea, even the martyrdom of the body, where there is no regeneration of the soul; all these, and every other, leave the professor just where nature found him, in the old *Adam*-nature of sin, unrenewed by the HOLY GHOST, unwashed in the blood of CHRIST, unsanctified, and unchosen by the FATHER; and plainly demonstrate, from scripture testimony, that they have no lot or part in the matter. So that, as I have more than once before observed, in this *Poor Man's Commentary*, those five words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, throw to the ground all pretensions void of spiritual life, and dash the hopes of all hypocrites: *Ye must be born again.* John iii. 7.

Lastly, to add no more. What *Jude* begins with, in this awful account, the Church makes her first and last conclusion, in tracing the whole to its source; namely, the *certain men* the Apostle saith, which *crept in unawares*, under those several specious forms of character, *were before of old ordained to this condemnation*. This testimony to God's sovereignty, so hateful to the sensual, *who have not the SPIRIT*, and so precious to the faithful, who know, by distinguishing grace, their *adoption in CHRIST JESUS*; places the whole truths of God upon their proper basis; and explains the subject, in all its different bearings, and in all the variety of circumstances, in which, through all ages, the grace of God hath appeared. Reader! pause once more. If the LORD hath mercifully brought you into an acquaintance with the plague of your own heart, and if (as cannot then but be the sweet and precious testimony to the truth as it is in JESUS,) your views of God's sovereignty, and your acquaintance with

CHRIST, arising out of it, be in your own soul's experience, look with astonishment at the distinguishing mercy, in partaking in *the faith once delivered to the saints*. Every child of God, in the present awful day, of a CHRIST-despising generation, is a wonder to himself, as well as to many. He is a living witness for GOD; and oh! how ought he to esteem it his highest honor, to bear this loudest testimony to his holy Name; that though the day is not unlike the day of *Elijah*, yet GOD hath still reserved to himself thousands, that *have not*, and will not *bow the knee to the image of Baal*. *Even so now*, (saith the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle,) *at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace*. Rom. xi. 4, 5.

I do not think it necessary to dwell long on these several verses in this Epistle, which might be gratifying, in a way of curiosity, but are not immediately necessary to be known, in a way of salvation. *Jude* reminds the people, concerning the visible Church in Egypt. Though numbers of *Israel* after the flesh, which accompanied the people of GOD on their deliverance from *Pharaoh*, and thereby had all the advantages of a *temporal* salvation; yet, having no part nor lot in the matter, in the *spiritual* salvation by CHRIST, went no further, for their carcases fell in the wilderness. Rom. ix. 6, 7. Heb. iii. 16 to the end. And the angels which kept not their first estate, not being *elect* angels, but left to the mutability of their own will, fell, and in that fall, were everlastingly condemned. The Reader, in the view of this subject, if taught of GOD, will find subject for endless praise. For such is the unavoidable consequence of all created nature, whether in angels or men, that, if not preserved in CHRIST JESUS, must have been subject to fall. No one creature, either angel or man, being in their own nature secured from falling, unless kept by a power superior to their own. That power can only be the GOD-MAN CHRIST. Not as GOD only. For then there could be no standing in with GOD. And as man only, there would have been no omnipotency, to have upheld. But as both, GOD and man in one Person, there is a suitability to the glorious deed. And, therefore, both angel and man, in the election of grace, the *former* by dominion, and the *latter* by union, are *elect* and preserved. Oh! what cause there is, for unceasing thanksgiving and praise, for the remnant, according to the election of grace! And truly, we may say with the Prophet; *except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*, Isaiah i. 9.

I have given my views, in my *Poor Man's Concordance*, concerning the Archangel, and therefore shall not enlarge on the subject in this place. There can be but one Archangel, from the very name. Those who talk of Archangels, or Arks, seem to have forgotten the sense of words. And as we meet with the name Archangel but twice in the whole book of GOD, and both when speaking of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, there can be but little question that it is him which is referred to, and that by way of office. He is called Prince, or Chief, in the prophecy of Daniel, x. 13, 21. I would not presume to be wise above what is written, but, concerning the contention here spoken of, as no part of scripture hath noticed it, I can say nothing of it with certainty. The chiefest feature in it to remark is, the LORD'S meekness. See Zech. iii. 1, 2.

Of *Enoch's* prophecy, the HOLY GHOST hath given no record. Perhaps it was not written, but oral. But the account here stated, is, perhaps, in correspondence with all the parts of scripture which relate to CHRIST's coming. By the seventh from *Adani*, is not meant the seventh person, for, doubtless, numbers both of sons and daughters were born to Adam, and his children, before *Enoch* was born. See Gen. v. 4, &c. But, by the seventh from *Adam*, is meant the *seventh* generation, in the line of the Church, and which were *Adam, Sheth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, Enoch*. 1 Chron. i. 1, 2.

20 ¶ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

The Apostle here enters upon the subject of the Church, in pointing out her safety in CHRIST, amidst all that he had said before of reprobates. And a very sweet close on this subject he makes of his Epistle. By building up in their most holy faith, and praying in the HOLY GHOST, and keeping themselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life, we must not suppose that the Apostle meant as if the Church was her own keeper, or that she could create faith in her heart whenever she pleased. All the parts of scripture teacheth, and every child of God's heart is in full testimony to the same, that they who are kept, are kept by the power of God, unto eternal life. And the LORD himself confirms the sweet assurance, that the Church is *preserved in* JESUS CHRIST. Yes, he saith to her, *In that day, sing ye to her a vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3. 1 Peter i. 5. But, by building up ourselves in our most holy faith, and praying in the HOLY GHOST, is meant a continual waiting for the influences of the SPIRIT, and, under those influences, attending diligently on the several means of grace and ordinances of the LORD, and strengthening each other's hands and hearts in the LORD. And a sense of our daily need of CHRIST, will, through the SPIRIT's blessing,

lead the soul to a daily abiding *in* CHRIST, and acting faith *upon* CHRIST. And, by looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, unto eternal life, implies a sure, fixed, and certain hope of being interested in all the blessed and glorious events of that great day of God. I admire the Apostle's expression, when he calls it *the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST*. For, surely, it can be nothing but mercy, where there is nothing but undeserving. But, though a mercy, it is a *sure* mercy. For a soul, truly regenerated, is truly justified, and truly sanctified in the LORD, and nothing remains doubtful as to the issue of that day. 2 Peter i. 3, 4. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Cor. i. 30. Isaiah xlv. 24, 25. The Apostle *Jude* would not have been taught by the HOLY GHOST to give the Church this confidence, had a question of uncertainty remained. Neither could the Apostles *Paul* or *Peter* have called the very expectation of it *blessed*, had not an assurance of glory in CHRIST been wrapped up in it. Titus ii. 13. 2 Peter iii. 12. Reader! what saith your experience to these things? Doth *your* heart correspond with the Apostle's?

There is somewhat most affectionate and tender in the love of brethren in JESUS. The compassion shewn to wanderers, and backsliders, and those that are tempted and fallen, and those that are ignorant and out of the way, is sweet. We are propelled, by grace, to stretch forth the helping hand, in any way, and every way, to raise up the fallen. And, as we are ignorant who is, and who is not among the LORD's people, while no work of regeneration appears by outward testimony; we wish to save, as from the fire, those who are in the confines of extreme danger. And though we loath their sins as we loath our own garments, which, by wrapping round our bodies of corruption, are spotted and defiled, yet we love their persons, when the LORD leads out our souls in desires after their salvation.

The concluding clause of this beautiful Epistle is very striking. *Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our SAVIOR, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever. Amen.* What a long and beautiful sermon might a preacher, taught of God the SPIRIT, find in these words! We cannot for a moment hesitate to know whom the Apostle means. He that hath all along preserved his Church, must be the same that keeps her from falling. And it is the special and personal office of CHRIST, to present his Church to himself at the last day. We nowhere read in scripture, concerning the person of GOD the FATHER, or GOD the HOLY GHOST, presenting the Church before the throne. It is GOD the SON's *personal* office, as Mediator, to bring her home as a bride adorned for her husband, and present her to himself. Hence that beautiful description given to the Church by *Paul*. CHRIST loved the Church, saith *Paul*, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish. Ephes. v. 25—27. But, in addition to what is here said, it may be remarked, that all along, from one eternity to another, it is CHRIST's charge, and CHRIST's care, yea, and this scripture saith, his exceeding joy, to watch over his Church, which is part of himself, and to keep her from falling, as well as to present her to himself at last,

finally and fully prepared by himself, in body, soul, and spirit, for his everlasting spouse and companion, to run the whole round of eternity with him, in his glory for ever.

Let the Reader pause over this subject, for the meditation of it is sweet. The Church, chosen in JESUS CHRIST before the foundation of the world, is, as *Jude* saith, in the opening of this Epistle, preserved in JESUS CHRIST. And, in the close of it, is commended to CHRIST JESUS, to be kept faultless, and at length presented in glory. *Jude* saith, he is able. And no one can doubt his willingness. And if, as he hath represented it himself, it becomes a subject of such delight to him, to bring home one poor lost sheep, which had strayed from his fold, as to induce him to call his friends and neighbours around him, to rejoice with him over this one which was lost; what exceeding joy may we suppose it will be to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, when he shall bring home his whole flock, consisting of millions of people, to and before a congregated world, saved with an everlasting salvation, so as to wander no more. Reader! have you been much accustomed to consider the subject in this view? Do you, in your own instance, know what it is to be preserved in CHRIST JESUS, called to CHRIST JESUS, kept by CHRIST JESUS, and are now living upon CHRIST JESUS? If so, you will need nothing from me to shew you the blessedness of it. But you will feel both the sweetness of *Jude's* words, as well as those of *Paul* to the Church, upon the same occasion, when he said, *Now the very GOD of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.* 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

The doxology must not pass unnoticed, for it is very blessed. *To the only wise GOD our SAVIOR!* That this hymn is suited to each, and to all the Persons of the GODHEAD, as being all engaged, and having all co-operated in the salvation of the Church, is very certain, and all regenerated believers in CHRIST will gladly join in so sweet a song. But, that CHRIST is here specially and personally meant, is evident, because he is specially and personally our SAVIOR. Moreover, it is the LORD JESUS, who is particularly spoken of in the preceding verse, with which this is connected. And, as in those two gracious acts of CHRIST, as mentioned before, namely, *keeping the Church from falling, and presenting the Church faultless, at last, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy*, these are CHRIST's special and personal offices; the praise here ascribed appears to be the immediate consequence the Church desires to give him. And there is one circumstance more, which, in my view, renders it particularly proper, namely, that those ascriptions of praise appear to be the Redeemer's personal right.

The Reader will not need that I should tell him, that GOD only wise, our SAVIOR, very blessedly suits him, because, when upon earth, he was upbraided by men for ignorance. *How knoweth this man letters, (say they,) having never learned.* John vii. 15. JESUS is worthy of all possible glory; because, when he came to redeem his people, he emptied himself of all glory, and took upon him the form of a servant. Philip. ii. 7. And surely majesty was his inherent right, though, when on earth, he hid not his face from shame and spitting. Isa. l. 6. *Dominion* belongeth to the LORD, and an eternal monarchy over all, though, while below, he had not where to lay his head. Luke ix. 58.

And all power is his for ever, for he hath power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as the FATHER hath given him. John xvii. 2. though the insult offered him on the cross was, he saved others; himself he cannot save. Mark xv. 31. Glorious Almighty SAVIOR! GOD only wise, thy Church hail thee! Be thou eternally loved, and praised, and adored: thou art worthy to receive all glory, and honor, and power, and might, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD, by thy blood.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! hath GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his gracious teachings, blest, to your perusal and mine, this precious portion of his sacred Word? Are we that of distinguished people, who are sanctified by GOD the FATHER, preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called? Oh! then, let us both beg another blessing from our bountiful GOD, and ask for grace, that on our bended knees we may cry out with the Apostle, *thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

And we desire to praise the Almighty Minister of his Church, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, for the grace he hath shewn, in fore-warning, and fore-arming his people, concerning the last days here-sies. Truly, LORD, we live to see them. We live among them. And thanks to our GOD, for giving his Church such plain features of character, as are here drawn by his servant, and by which, under the LORD's teaching, we cannot fail to know them. Oh! what shall thy people say; what praise shall thy people offer, while reading the striking distinction which mark thy redeemed from the world. The one, sanctified, preserved, and called; the other, ordained of old to this condemnation, *denying the only LORD GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST!*

We bless our GOD for the faithfulness of his servant *Jude*, in this scripture. And, while we look to the Eternal SPIRIT with praise for making him faithful, we would honor the instrument, whom GOD so graciously made use of in the work. *Jude, the servant of JESUS CHRIST, and brother of James*, we thank thee for thy labor of love. The whole Church, in all ages, have found cause to thank thee for it, from thy time to the present hour. And, oh! LORD the SPIRIT, give grace to thy faithful now, to testify their sense of the mercy vouchsafed the Church in this precious Epistle, *by earnestly contending for the faith, once delivered unto the saints*. Oh! keep thy people, LORD, from being led away with the speciousness of the times! Oh! for grace, to own and praise CHRIST, before a CHRIST-despising generation! Oh! for an holy boldness, from the LORD, to stand up for the LORD, and to resist the bait of supposing we can honor GOD's glory, while silently sitting and mingling with those who dishonor his GODHEAD, disown the Person and Work of the SPIRIT, and boldly deny the electing-love of GOD the FATHER. Unto such assemblies, my soul, be not thou united! LORD JESUS! do thou keep all thine from this, and every other evil, until thou shalt bring all thy redeemed home, and *present them faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding joy*. Amen.

THE
REVELATION
 OF
 ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I PRAY for grace, to enter upon this sublime and mysterious Book of God, while proposing my humble observations upon it, with the most profound reverence and godly fear. And as I approach the mercy-seat, to bend the knee of my soul, before the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that in meditating on this blessed portion of his holy word, which relates so immediately to the Person of CHRIST and his kingdom, the LORD may give unto me, *the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*

Indeed, when first I ventured on this *Poor Man's Commentary* of the Bible, I fully intended, if it should please the LORD to guide me through it, and bring me to this Book of the *Revelation*, to have passed over those sacred Chapters, without presuming to offer any observations of mine. I had seen so many erroneous opinions, from great and good men on this part of the word of GOD, and especially in their calculations of the *times*, when the several Prophecies, yet remaining to be fulfilled, would be accomplished, that I judged it rather presumptuous than wise, to touch this part of the inspired records. And I still think, that as those great and good men, (for great and good men they certainly were, in their day and generation,) have all been found in error, in limiting the period when those prophecies would certainly be fulfilled, it can neither be decent nor proper in men taught of GOD to presume to be *wise, above what is written*, and to offer their conjectures concerning what GOD hath not been pleased to discover. The words of JESUS to his disciples after he arose from the dead, in answer to the anxious enquiry they put to him, concerning the *time* of the LORD's restoring the kingdom of *Israel*, appears decided on this point; *It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons which the FATHER hath put in his own power.* Acts i. 6, 7. But when I read again and again, what is said in the opening of this precious Book of GOD; *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear*