

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*

*the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; I dared not be wholly silent. And I thought moreover, that if God the HOLY GHOST (whose guidings in this work I had all along implored, and whose grace in instruction in it I hope I can now, with truth, say I have found,) would still graciously condescend to go before, and follow me, the LORD would keep me from treading in, to that part of the sacred ground, which relates to prophecies yet unfulfilled, by attempting to calculate any time, when I might presume on their accomplishment, but leave it wholly to the LORD; while, under his teaching, I might humbly offer my observations, on such only, as we have seen come to pass. With these limitations I felt encouraged to prosecute my *Poor Man's Commentary* on this part also of the divine word, deriving advantage, even from the mistakes of those great servants of the LORD, which have gone before, and which in those points act as light-houses at sea, purposely placed there to keep off the mariner, from approaching too near the rocks, and quicksands around them.*

And I confess, that under these later views I have taken of the subject, I have felt additional encouragement, to prosecute my feeble labors for the *Poor Man's Commentary*, on this part of the word of God, from the recollection, that now in the present hour, time hath brought forward many things to view in this scripture, and, through the LORD's teaching, more light hath been thrown upon the predictions here given, than in the day when those great and good men lived, whom I allude to, who for years past have been *gathered to their fathers, and have seen corruption*. Many of the prophecies have since been accomplished, and more seem to be now accomplishing in the earth. And, indeed, on the supposition that we, who are now entered some years into the *nineteenth Century*, are they upon whom the ends of the world are come, it must behove the people of God to be on the lookout, like the Prophet on the watch-tower, and in prayer and humble waitings on the LORD, expect those manifestations predicted to be accomplished, concerning his Church. That the interests of *Zion*, are at the bottom of all God's designs in the earth, and that the putting down of one kingdom, and raising up of another, have no ultimate object, but of bringing on the LORD's purposes, concerning CHRIST and his Church; is too clear a truth to need the being insisted upon. And fully assured we are, that when all the prophecies which are in this Holy Scripture, yet remaining to be fulfilled, are accomplished, the last sand, in the hour-glass of time, will have run out; and the whole purposes of the LORD concerning this earth, will be compleated. And then, that event takes place, which *John* heard proclaimed by the Angel,

he lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer. Then, the mystery of God shall be finished. Then, the seventh Angel shall sound, and great voices will be heard in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Chap. x. 5, 6, 7. and Chap. xi. 15.

The great point of error, into which all my predecessors of Commentators, on this blessed Book of God, more or less, have fallen, I shall, through grace, wholly avoid. I shall not knowingly, offer a single attempt, in a way of calculation as to the time many have supposed, in which the prophecies herein contained, yet remaining to be fulfilled, will be accomplished. Here, I desire to remain, as much as ever, wholly silent. Indeed, it hath always appeared unto me, to have been along the LORD's design, in relation to the prophecies in general, to throw a veil over them, until they are fulfilled. And then, when they have been brought to pass, so compleat an agreement hath discovered itself, between the prediction and the event, that the LORD's people have found cause to stand the more amazed, at their dulness of perception and the LORD's glory. But there is a manifest wisdom of God in the obscurity. It tends to the promotion of greater faith. It calls forth greater dependence upon the LORD. And GOD speaks in his word, and by his word to his people, during the suspense of accomplishment, as he did to the Prophet of old; *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed to the time of the end. Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.* Daniel xii. 8, 9, 13.

I must not indulge myself with any longer Preface, in an humble work like this, on general points. But I must beg to extend these observations a little further, by way of introduction to the sacred Book of the *Revelation*, which we are going to enter upon. It will be proper at the threshold, to pause a moment and consider, both the LORD's gracious design, in his gift of it to the Church, and also to pray over it, as we enter upon it, that this blessing of a Covenant GOD in CHRIST may be made profitable to our souls.

That *John*, the beloved Apostle, was the Writer of it under GOD, and that the place where those revelations were made to him, was *Patmos* in the *Mediterranean* Sea, and where he was banished for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, about the year of our LORD GOD *ninety-four*; these are truths, so generally allowed and confirmed, as can need nothing additional, by way of proof, to be observed. And the gracious design of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in sealing up the sacred Canon of Scripture, with so divine a portion of his holy word, hardly requires to be remarked to any gracious Reader. This is a subject, which GOD the HOLY GHOST, hath had the unwearied

thanksgivings of the Church for, in every age, from *John's* days to ours; neither will this precious portion of divine truth, ever cease to call forth the continued praises of the LORD's people, till time shall be no more.

I shall request permission in this place, to give the Reader a brief statement, according to my view of the whole subject, of this Book of GOD, that he may have a general idea of the whole contents. Such a plan will serve, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, to guide both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, through the several Chapters; and enable him to discover, that there is a beautiful uniformity of order in the whole design, comprehending the several periods of the Church's history, from CHRIST's appearing to *John* at *Patmos*, until his second coming at judgment. From such a view, we shall proceed through the several Chapters, with a greater clearness of apprehension, of the whole subject; and, through grace, have our minds better prepared, to hear *what the SPIRIT saith to the Churches!*

For the better understanding this sublime Book of GOD, let the Reader recollect, that when the SON of GOD appeared to *John*, as the opening of the *first* Chapter declares, the Seven Churches to whom he sent the messages, contained in the *second* and *third* Chapters, were then in being. Of these the LORD speaks, when he calls them *the things which are*. Rev. i. 19. And all that is contained in those two Chapters, refer to them. But the prophetic part of the Revelation, which begins at the *fourth* Chapter, comes under, what CHRIST calls *the things which shall be hereafter*. Rev. i. 19. Hence, from the *fourth* Chapter is commenced, the prophecies of events, which the LORD foretold his servant *John* should be accomplished in his Church. And in the *fifth* Chapter, we have what may be called the instalment of CHRIST into his High Offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. With these preliminary views, if we prosecute the Book, through the several Chapters, we shall discover the beautiful order, connection, and harmony of one great whole, from beginning to end.

And let the Reader recollect no less, that at the time when the LORD JESUS manifested himself to his Apostle *John*, to give to him these revelations, to shew unto his Churches, the *Roman Empire*, which was mistress of the world, was then heathen. *Satan* had universal sway, and excepting that handful of the LORD's people, formed here and there into Churches, the earth was full of idols. The *Jews* nationally considered, for their rejection of the LORD of life and glory, had lost their temple, their government, their beloved *Jerusalem*, and were now scattered over various parts of the globe. This was the state of things respecting religion, when the SON of GOD appeared to his servant *John* as here stated; and delivered to

him these predictions, which were from age to age, to be progressively accomplished in the Church, from that period to the final consummation of all things. The sum and substance of the whole, is set forth, though in mysterious terms, to intimate that the Church of CHRIST should be opposed by the powers of darkness; during which, *seals* were to be opened, *trumpets* sounded, and *vials* poured out; but, at length, order should arise out of confusion, and light from darkness. The Church of GOD should triumph over all, and the throne of GOD and the LAMB, be discovered as established for ever.

Such was the state of things, when the subject of prophecy begins at the *sixth* Chapter, with the opening of the *seals*. The ministry of the seals, appears to be principally, if not wholly directed, in the preaching of the Gospel against heathenism. And we find from history, that from about *three hundred years* from the period at the opening of the *first seal*, the *Roman Empire* became Christian; that is, made a national profession of christianity. This event took place in the government of the Emperor *Constantine*.

To the ministry of the *seals*, when finished, succeeded that of the *Trumpets*. The time to the Trumpet ministry takes in a much larger compass than that of the *Seals*; yea, it should seem is not yet finished. For the sounding of the *seventh* Trumpet is, when the mystery of GOD shall be finished. Rev. x. 7. And it should appear very plainly, that the opening of the *twelfth* Chapter, begins with a new subject of prophecy; I say a *new subject of prophecy*, because the former terminates in the preceding Chapter, with the relation of *the day of the LORD* being come, and the *temple of GOD* being opened in *heaven*. Chap. xi. 18, 19. But though a new subject of prophecy, yet not a new subject, as it concerns CHRIST and his kingdom, for this is but one and the same, through the whole book of Revelation, from the first opening of the seals at the *sixth* Chapter, to the account of the paradise of GOD, in the *twenty-second*. All, and every part under the different predictions, is in relation to CHRIST and his Church.

The *twelfth* Chapter, as it appears to me, opens with the state of the *Roman Empire*, when it became (nationally considered) no longer heathen, but professing christianity. And now, according to this Chapter, persecution began, from the heresies springing up in the Empire, among the Christians themselves. And this subject occupies the following Chapters to the *eighteenth*, where the final destruction of Antichrist is shewn, in the total overthrow of the *two* great branches of those powers, subverting the truths of GOD in the Eastern and Western world. And these events, evidently remain, at present, unfulfilled.

During this period, the ministry of the *Vials* is said to be exercised. These will all be noted in their proper place. In

the mean time, it will be sufficient here to observe, that with the pouring out of the last Vial upon the air, which figuratively should seem to intimate the whole kingdom of Satan, (who in this sense is called *the Prince of the power of the air*, Ephes. ii. 2.) the opposition to CHRIST's kingdom ceaseth for ever. Hence the *nineteenth* Chapter opens with the accounts of the triumphs in heaven, over all the enemies of CHRIST and his salvation. The chaining of *Satan* in the bottomless pit follows in the *twentieth*; and the Church of CHRIST coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband, is related in the *twenty-first* Chapter. And the whole subject is closed up in the *twenty-second*, with the description of the glory of GOD and of the LAMB, in the salvation of the Church, and the destruction of the wicked. These are the general outlines of this most blessed and precious Book of GOD. I will detain the Reader no longer from entering upon it, than only once again to look up for grace, and the light of the HOLY GHOST, to guide both at the entrance, and through all the departments of it to the end. May that Almighty and Infallible Teacher, direct both heart and pen, that nothing of error may be found in those pages, but all be so graciously dictated by Him, that the LORD's glory, and the Church's happiness, may be ministered unto in these feeble services, through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

After a short Preface of what the Apostle is called to, in the Ministry of this Book of Revelation, he addresseth the Seven Churches of Asia, with the Salutation of Grace and Peace. He speaks most blessedly of the Person and Glory of CHRIST, in his appearing to Him, and relates what passed at this Interview.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

This is most properly assigned to JESUS CHRIST, the revelation herein given to *John*. For as none was found worthy to open the book and to loose the seals, but CHRIST himself as Mediator, so all revelation, primarily and effectually, must be in him and from him. And I beg the Reader by the way, not to overlook in this relation given of CHRIST, how very fully it proclaims, his eternal power and GODHEAD, since none but one that hath fore-knowledge, could foretell future events. And although in this place, CHRIST is here spoken of, as the CHRIST of GOD, the Mediator, yet such powers demonstrate, what all the scriptures, with one voice declare, that CHRIST is both GOD and MAN, in this most blessed character. No sooner was CHRIST set as JEHOVAH's King in Zion, than he instantly acts in that high office, and saith, *I will declare the decree*. Compare Rev. v. 6, 8, with Psm. ii. 6, 7.

By the phrase of *things which must shortly come to pass*, can mean no more, than their beginning to be accomplished. For very certain it is, that we are now arrived into the opening of the *nineteenth* Century; and though much hath been fulfilled, much remains yet to be accomplished. But the commencement of the predictions and events then delivered to *John*, were shortly to be accomplished in part, and thus go on from generation to generation, until the whole were finished.

John was specially chosen, to have these sacred things brought before him, and to deliver them to the Church, for he had enjoyed a more than ordinary acquaintance with the Person of his LORD, during his ministry upon earth. And under the HOLY GHOST, had borne a most decided testimony to the LORD JESUS and his office-character, as the Uncreated WORD and the CHRIST of GOD. John i. 14. 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. Reader! do not overlook the blessedness pronounced on reading, hearing, and keeping in remembrance the glorious records, here given to the Person, and Ministry of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is a great encouragement to be diligent in our attention, to this most precious book of God. Oh! may the HOLY GHOST open its blessed contents to my view, and write them in my heart, that God *in all things may be glorified through JESUS CHRIST*.

4 **J** JOHN to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him *be* glory and dominion for

The names of these seven Churches we have enumerated in the eleventh verse. And, awful to relate, they are now all of them in the hands of the Turks, and under the horrible delusion of the infamous doctrine of *Mahomet*; called in this scripture, *the false Prophet*! Chap. xvi. 13. See Reader! how sure are God's judgments! While the Church of CHRIST must stand for ever, neither can the gates of hell prevail against it, Nations, that is, professing nations, where that Church hath once flourished, as *Ephesus*, may be given up to utter ruin. The house of God standeth sure, but the Candlestick is a moveable article in the house; and may be removed, when the iniquity of a land (as *Sodom* was before its destruction) is full. Oh! who that seriously lays at heart, the deplorable state of our highly favored nation, but finds cause to tremble, lest God should give it up to barrenness, *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*. Psm. cvii. 34. A CHRIST-despising generation, in which his GODHEAD is impudently denied in open day, and now, no law to punish the daring offenders!

I admire the very blessed expressions in the Apostle's salutation. What a degree of elevation, the souls of Prophets and Apostles arrived at, under divine influence, when speaking the praises of JEHOVAH. And how much they all delighted, to celebrate each Person of the GODHEAD; and each office-character belonging to each Person of the GODHEAD, as revealed to the Church in the Covenant of grace? And wherefore should New Testament saints come short of sounding forth, the high praises of the HOLY THREE in ONE, who have such increasing causes, in the increasing testimonies of their grace; accumulating, as that grace must daily do, in the swelling tide continually running from age to age through the Church?

I would not insist upon a single point of doctrine, as being confirmed, but upon evidences the most incontestible. But I would humbly ask, are not the sacred THREE in ONE distinctly spoken of in those hallowed words; *from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come*? From *Him*, in allusion, as may be supposed, to the divine Unity, and in which the whole Three Persons are included. *Which is, and which was, and which is to come*; meaning God the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in the eternity and unchangeableness of their essence, as God, and in which, each, and all these divine properties, belong to each, and to all. And in their office-character also, which they have most graciously entered into in the Covenant, those distinctions belong to each and to all. For, as their nature and the engagements to each other, respecting the Church, are everlasting; so, to the Church in CHRIST, it may and must be said of them, *which is, and which was, and which is to come*. Reader! what a sweet thought is it, that our mercies are everlasting and unchangeable; for the LORD JEHOVAH from whom they come, is everlasting and unchangeable!

But while we thus give equal glory to the HOLY THREE in ONE, both as we contemplate each, and fall in their Personal distinctions, and in their united glory, as the One Eternal JEHOVAH; we have in this scripture also, very blessed views of each, in those distinctions of character, as they stand in relation to the Church. GOD the FATHER in his choice of the Church, in his gift of the Church to CHRIST, and in all his purposes of grace and mercy, flowing from his everlasting

love to the Church, both is, and was, and is to come. What GOD the FATHER now is, such he always was, and such he always will be, to his Church in CHRIST. And what GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his everlasting love to the Church now is, such he always was, and such he always will be; and such the SON as GOD, and as GOD-Man Mediator. There can be no change in either.

But there is another blessed view this scripture furnisheth, namely, where GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his office-character, as it concerns the Church, is called *the seven Spirits which are before the throne*. That is not seven persons, for GOD the HOLY GHOST is One in his Person, as are the Person of the FATHER, and of the SON, but it means GOD the SPIRIT, in his sevenfold gifts and graces, diversified to the Church as they are imparted. *Seven* is a perfect number. And by this perfection, this number is specified, as implying a fullness and perfection of all the gifts and blessings, he imparts to the Church in CHRIST. And it is blessed to observe, that as the HOLY GHOST gives his unction, both to the great Head of the Church, and to all his members, and of the same grace, though not in the same degree; (See John iii. 34. with Ephes. iv. 7.) so, when he anointed CHRIST and abode upon him, (See John i. 32.) as was prophecied, the LORD, the HOLY GHOST is said to have done it, in this sevenfold manner. *First*. He is said to have rested upon him. *Secondly*. The SPIRIT of wisdom. *Thirdly*. Understanding. *Fourthly*. The SPIRIT of Counsel. *Fifthly*. Might. *Sixthly*. Knowledge. *Seventhly*. The fear of the LORD. Isaiah xi. 2. Reader! what beauties are in the scripture! What wonders do they unfold!

One word more on this glorious beginning of the book of Revelation. John saith also: *And from JESUS CHRIST, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth*. Here it is very plain, that what is said of CHRIST, is said of him in relation to his Person and offices, as GOD-Man Mediator. Not as GOD only, for then, in that sense, he could not be called *the first begotten of the dead*. Neither as man only; for then, he could not be *the faithful witness*, in revealing things of eternity, and testifying to the eternal truths of JEHOVAH, by his SPIRIT, in the hearts and consciences of his people. But, by the union of both, GOD and Man in one Person, he is *the faithful witness* GOD hath given to the people; and the *Amen*, in whom the Church is blessed for ever. Isaiah lv. 4. Rev. iii. 15. Isaiah lxv. 16. In this sweet and gracious point of view, all that is here said of CHRIST, is truly blessed. He is *the first begotten of the dead*, as he is *the first in the beginning of the creation* of GOD. *All things were made by him*. Colos. i. 15, 16, 17. And in resurrection, the first fruits, and the first and sole cause of resurrection, to his members. For though several instances are on scripture record, of the raising of the dead, before CHRIST arose; yet these were all by his power. This JESUS explained and proved, at the resurrection of *Lazarus*; when, having called him forth from the grave, he declared himself to be *the resurrection and the life*: and having said it, gave the specimen of it, by the immediate miracle that followed. John xi. 25, 43. By *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, doth not simply mean, his government of his Church only, but his universal and everlasting monarchy over the whole creation of GOD. *All power is given to me* (JESUS himself said) *in heaven and earth*. So

that our JESUS, as God-Man Mediator, hath unlimited sovereignty and dominion, over all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. Matt. xxviii. 18. Ephes. i. 20—23. And add to these, there is a special blessing here spoken of, in reference to his Church; and the Apostle breaks out into an hymn of praise, while he mentions it. *Unto him (saith he) that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his FATHER; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Reader! do observe the blessedness of what is here said, with a special relation to CHRIST's Church. The Apostle had before spoken of CHRIST's unlimited government over all things, but here it is in his relationship to his body the Church. And do observe yet further, the beautiful order of these unspeakable blessings. Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us. Remark, I pray you, that it is his *love* which is the *cause*. And his *washing* us is the *effect*. I never can say enough to you, nor my own heart also, on all the blessed properties of redemption. What would have become of the whole Church, the whole body of CHRIST's members, fallen in the *Adam*-nature of sin and ruin, had not JESUS redeemed them, and washed them in his blood? But, when we have carried this to the highest pitch of our admiration and praise; still the *cause* of all this is to be extolled and delighted in, before the *effect*. Reader! let you and I daily, hourly, minutely, bless the whole GODHEAD, for all our mercies; pardon and peace with all that are connected with this blessedness, in the blood of the cross; but above all these, let us bless God for his love! Oh! who shall describe, what heart shall conceive, the love of God, and of CHRIST, *which passeth knowledge?*

7 ¶ Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

How beautifully the Apostle breaks off at this verse, from what he had been saying before, to honor, and glorify the Son of God. He is indeed still on the same subject; for his whole heart seemed to be on fire, at what he had been meditating, concerning CHRIST's love, in the redemption of his people. But at this verse, he breaks out in a devout rapture of holy joy, as though he beheld CHRIST as immediately appearing to his view. He connects the blessed subject of washing his people with his blood, as now coming in the clouds, to receive them to himself; and, overpowered with the contemplation, he cries out: *Behold he cometh!* Reader! ponder well the several weighty things in this blessed verse. *First.* The certainty of CHRIST's coming. So the Angels, which attended the ascension of CHRIST, assured the Church of the certainty of his descension. Acts i. 11. *Secondly.* The object of his coming. To judge the world in righteousness, and minister judgment to the people. Psm. ix. 8. *Thirdly.* The different effects produced by his coming; every eye shall see him, they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; that is, everlasting horror will come upon all his enemies, all the CHRIST-despisers; all of this description, in all kindreds where

they are, shall be tremblingly alive, in the anguish of their souls, at his appearing. But his people shall shout aloud with holy joy at his approach, and put their hearty *even so, Amen*, in confirmation of it. Reader! what saith your heart to these things? If you can welcome Jesus, approach now in ordinances; if his Person, blood, and righteousness, be dear to you *now*, surely His coming will be so *then*! If Jesus saith *I come quickly*! Can you answer, *even so, come Lord Jesus*? Surely our knowledge and love of Jesus *here*, are sweet testimonies of our delight in him, both *here* and *hereafter*.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

What a blessed verse is here! It should seem, that no sooner had the beloved Apostle ended, as in the verse before, his rapturous expressions, in contemplating the Person of his Lord; but Jesus instantly appeared, and delivered himself in these most precious words, as if confirming all that his servant had said of him. *I am Alpha and Omega*. Thrice in this Chapter, here, and again at the 11th and 17th verses, the Lord Jesus takes to himself these characters of distinction. And, to confirm it yet more finally, and fully, in the last Chapter of this book of the Revelation, as if to leave the impression in full force upon the minds of his people through all ages of his Church, he repeats those names, and puts the whole together: *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*. Rev. xxii. 13.

Now let us pause, and consider these solemn words as they are. And then say, what can be stronger, in proof of eternity, and all divine perfections? *Alpha* is the first letter in the Greek Alphabet, and *Omega* the last. There is none that comes before, neither any that comes after. Now, these are the distinguishing characters of JEHOVAH. None is before, none after. Hence we find the Lord taking to himself these attributes, as so many standards of character, in confirmation of his GODHEAD. *Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any!* And this is said at a time when the Lord had been using the same language as is here used, saying: *I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God*. Let the Reader compare the scriptures, and he must be led to see, that the language is one and the same, and from the same Almighty Speaker. Isaiah xlv. 6—8. See also Isaiah xli. 4. and xlviii. 12.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first

and the last : and, What thou seest write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches,

The Apostle now enters upon his work, to which the Lord had called him, and begins his relation of it, with an account of himself,

where he was, how he was engaged, and the time in which those visions began. There is somewhat very interesting in the Apostle's plain, and artless narrative. A brother, and companion in tribulation to the Church, being at that time in banishment, for the truth as it is in JESUS. It was the LORD's day, not the Jewish sabbath; for though *John* was by birth a *Jew*, yet, after the resurrection of JESUS, the followers of CHRIST changed the *seventh* day of the week into the first, in honor of CHRIST, and called it *the LORD's day*. Reader! this is a full confirmation of the LORD's approving the change. And it is a blessed recommendation to the honoring the LORD's day, when we find, as in the instance of *John*, on this day the LORD was pleased to make this glorious manifestation of himself to his servant. May not all regenerated believers in JESUS, humbly expect visits, sweet and gracious, from the LORD, on *the LORD's day*? Who that reads this account of *John*, in JESUS's mercies towards him on that day of the LORD, but are encouraged to hope, that in honoring those holy seasons, in the congregation of the faithful, we may be also blest, and be in the SPIRIT on the LORD's day?

I do not venture to enter upon a description, beyond what is here given by the HOLY GHOST, concerning the Person and glory of the LORD. It is infinitely sublime, as represented in these words. All attempts to add to it must fail. I shall only beg to call the Reader's attention to some of the many blessed things contained in it; and may the same Almighty SPIRIT, which was then with *John*, be with all his people, to give them a right understanding in all things!

And, *first*. Our grand concern in this, and all other manifestations given of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is, to pray for a proper, and just apprehension of his Person. Faith's object is CHRIST. And, therefore, in order to have a right foundation to our faith, we must first know CHRIST, or our faith in him, will not be correct. We find here, the LORD JESUS taking to himself all divine perfections. The Alpha, and Omega, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. We no less hear him declaring himself under the same distinction of attributes, in his Mediator-character; and, in the moment when he had laid his right-hand upon *John*, and when he added, *I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore!* Now, what can more plainly, or more fully confirm all the great and leading truths of our most holy faith, than that CHRIST is GOD; and that, as CHRIST, in our nature, he is come forth, from the invisibility of the GODHEAD, to reveal the will of GOD to his people. If no man hath seen GOD at any time, if no man can see the face of GOD and live, and if the only begotten SON, who lay in the bosom of the FATHER, hath come forth, and he only, to declare him; can there be a proof wanting, that it is the SON of GOD, who is one with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, in all the divine attributes, which makes all the revelations that are, or can be made, of himself, and FATHER, and SPIRIT, in our nature; and in the moment of such discoveries, manifests his GODHEAD, by assuming all the perfections of the GODHEAD, and thereby proves that blessed scripture, where it is said, that *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily?* Coloss. ii. 9. Reader! what are your apprehensions of the Person of CHRIST? Remember, it is the very bottom, and foundation of every other article of faith. Bear with me, while I venture to say to you

one plain truth of scripture. *No man can say that JESUS is the LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST.* 1 Cor. xii. 3. When *John*, as here stated, saw CHRIST; and when he heard, and received, and recorded the things he had seen; he was in the SPIRIT. Mark that! And it is GOD the SPIRIT now, as much as then, that can alone cause the spirits of men to the belief of this great truth. When the SON of GOD was upon earth, he referred all his proofs of himself to this divine teaching. *The works that I do in my FATHER's name, they bear witness of me.* John x. 25. And as JESUS by the SPIRIT wrought his miracles, every act of this nature, carried the SPIRIT's testimony with it, to his GODHEAD. And I pray the Reader to observe what I am going to add on this subject. *John*, we are here told, was in the SPIRIT when he gave this testimony to the GODHEAD of CHRIST. And *David*, we are also told, was under the same blessed teaching; when in SPIRIT he called JESUS LORD. It is CHRIST himself which refers to the cxth Psalm in confirmation of it, when in conversation with the Jews he quoted it: *The LORD said unto my LORD; said David.* A plain proof of those Persons in the GODHEAD, and which can be explained on no other ground. Reader! let me take the words of our GOD and SAVIOR, and put the question to *your* heart, which He did to the Pharisees: What think *you* of CHRIST? Matt. xxii. 41—46.

Secondly. Next to the right apprehension of CHRIST's Person, as the great object of faith, is the conviction of all the leading points, which belong to his office, and relations, and character. His full, and finished salvation, is here most compleatly set forth, and set forth under these strong expressions: *Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore: Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.* Observe, what immense things are here spoken of by the LORD JESUS, for his redeemed to rest with full assurance upon. And observe, how the LORD JESUS puts one of his glorious names, the *Amen*, the faithful witness, in the very middle of what he saith, by way of stamping, signing, sealing, and delivering this blessed Charter. It becomes like the Patent of heaven. It confirms, and establisheth the Royal Society of his Kings and Priests, whom he hath made in his Kingdom. It is what I call the everlasting Indenture of the Covenant. And faith gives a right of holding, a present fee-simple, in the inheritance by CHRIST, which is *incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* Oh! the blessedness, when He who laid his right hand upon *John*, confirms with equal assurance, by his HOLY SPIRIT, the princely grant in every heart of his people, which is to the same effect; saying, *Fear not! Precious, and Almighty JESUS! thou hast indeed the key of all authority and power, even the Key of David; to open, and none can shut; to shut, and none can open.* Isaiah xxii. 22. LORD! do thou open thy word to my soul! and do thou open my heart to thy word. Oh! the blessed assurance! My GOD, my SAVIOR, hath the key of death, the key of hell, the key of heaven. At his girdle they all hang; and none can open either, but by his authority. How secure are all thy redeemed! Precious JESUS! *all power is thine, in heaven and in earth!*

One word more on this blessed Chapter! JESUS commanded *John* to write the things he had seen. And we have reason to bless the LORD, that he both wrote, and by the LORD's authority, hath sent what he

saw, to his Church. And what a delightful instruction the Church gathers from the whole? JESUS holds all his truly ordained ministers, ordained by God the HOLY GHOST, in his Almighty hand, as stars; and he is in the midst of his people, as here he appeared in the midst of the golden candlesticks, to bless them with his presence and his grace. From whence we plainly perceive, where the *one* gains all his ability to preach, and the *other* the ability to hear. Hence those sweet words to the *former*: *As the FATHER hath sent me, even so send I you.* John xx. 21. And to the *latter*: *Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world!* Matt. xxviii. 20. Reader! what saith your soul's experience to these things? It is blessed, yea, very blessed, when the *written* word is accompanied with the *engrafted* word; and when the child of God, hearing what the SPIRIT saith to the Churches, can set to his seal, that God *is true!*

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED! for ever blessed, be GOD the FATHER, for the gift of his dear SON JESUS CHRIST. Blessed! for ever blessed, be GOD the SON, for this gracious revelation of himself to his servant *John*, to comfort, and instruct the Church. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for causing so sweet and precious a record, to be handed down to the Church from generation to generation, of the word of GOD, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST. LORD! add a blessing to the whole, and give grace to thy people, that *they may hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.*

May it be the blessedness and felicity of the LORD's redeemed, to find grace and peace, according to the Apostle's benediction, from Him, *which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Yea! may the Church daily find all Covenant blessings, from GOD the Judge of all, from JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant, and from the influence of the HOLY GHOST, in his sevenfold gifts and graces, which are before the throne. Oh! the unspeakable mercy of GOD in CHRIST. He who hath made us Kings and Priests, unto GOD and the FATHER, *having loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his blood!*

Precious Emmanuel! thou who didst bless *John* with thy presence, and gavest him those blessed revelations, to deliver unto thy Church, condescend to visit thy people now. Thou art still the Alpha and the Omega. Thou art still all the blessedness of thy Church and people. LORD! visit thy Churches. No *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, or *Laodicea*, ever needed thee more, than the professing Churches of this land, where we dwell. Oh! then, come LORD, and take up thine own cause, lest our Churches, like those of Asia, which are now no more, be desolated, and without inhabitants. If JESUS will come forth with his people, if GOD the SPIRIT will ordain ministers, and walk up and down in the midst of his people; then will thy servants be as stars in the right hand of CHRIST, and his people, like the candlesticks, shining bright with the oil of grace, from JESUS walking in and out among them. Oh! for a little revival in the present day, that the LORD may not remove our candlestick out of its place!

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

Here begins the LORD's Message to the seven Churches. This Chapter contains what was commanded to be delivered to four of them; namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. And the Chapter closeth with a solemn Admonition, which is repeated to each: to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life; which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I beg on our entrance, of viewing these messages of CHRIST to his Churches, to make one or two general observations, as suited to the whole; and which, I request the Reader to keep in remembrance, through all the parts of this book of God.

And, *first*. It evidently appears, from several striking circumstances which meet us in the body of those several Epistles, that what our LORD then caused to be delivered by his servant *John* to those Churches, while it had an immediate eye to them, from the par-

ticular things the LORD reproved in them; yet was intended as so many messages to the Church of CHRIST, from that period, to the very end of time; different parts corresponding to the different ages. And, indeed, whoever reads with attention the LORD's charges against some of those Churches, will find, that they were not special to that age, or confined to that Church, to whom the LORD sent it; but that the same spots are seen in the LORD's Church even now. As for example. In this first charge to *Ephesus*, the LORD complains, that she had left her *first* love. Not that the Church was totally void of love, but that it was less warm, and fervent, than in the first days of her espousals. Reader! this is but too common now. And wherever it is found, we here learn how painful it is to CHRIST. See how sweetly the LORD took notice of the first love of the Church, at the coming forth out of Egypt; and how highly the LORD prized it. Jerem. ii. 1, 2, 3. So again, to the Church at *Sardis*. *I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead.* Chap. iii. 1. Reader! is not this very resembling the present hour, of the professing Church?

Secondly. Some of those Churches to whom *John* was directed to write, could hardly be said at that time, to be formed, but were forming. We have no account, either of the Church of *Sardis* or *Philadelphia*, before the *Second* Century. It doth not follow, indeed, from hence, that they were not in being. However, from the slenderness of those Churches in general, and from the too much sameness in defects, between those spoken of, and the Church of CHRIST in the several ages since, even to the present hour; we have full authority to conclude that the LORD JESUS, *whose eyes are as a flame of fire*, and who looketh through all time, intended these Epistles for the Church, to the latest period of the world.

Thirdly. To render this statement the more probable, it should be observed also, that while the LORD sent these Epistles to those seven Churches, which were in *Asia*; and some of them hardly in being, there were none of a like nature directed by the LORD to the Churches in *Judæa*, and *Corinth*, and *Colosse*, and *Philippi*, or the *Thessalonians*. All which carries a very strong conviction with it, that not those Churches only, and at that period, the LORD JESUS had in view, but to be of perpetual use in his Church, through all the intermediate ages, to the end of time.

Fourthly. As all these seven Churches are now no more, but the LORD hath, as he threatened he would, removed the candlestick out of its place, and the very ground where those highly favored temples once stood, are in the possession of the deluded followers of the false Prophet; and yet those messages sent to them, are with us, it should seem to be a most plain, and self evident conclusion, the LORD intended those Epistles for persons, and not places; and that in them the LORD still speaks to the Church, here represented by the perfect number *seven*, as representing the whole body in the different periods of time.

Having premised these observations, I would now call upon the Reader, to attend to the precious and important subjects, contained in those Epistles, and according to the order, in which they are here placed.

And *first*, of *Ephesus*. Of this city we have an account. Acts xviii. 19. It was a place of great trade and magnificence, but wholly

given to Idolatry. Here the LORD directed the steps of his servant the Apostle *Paul*, and caused him to plant a Church in it. And so greatly did the LORD bless and own his labors, that he continued in it two years; so that *all they which dwell in Asia, heard the word of the LORD, both Jews and Greeks.* Acts xix. 10. Here then, as this Church was in being, the message of the LORD JESUS to it, came under that part of CHRIST's command to *John*, in writing *the things which he had seen, and the things which are.* The other parts, either to Churches afterwards to rise, or of prophecies afterwards to be fulfilled, came under that part of CHRIST's command to his servant, to write of *the things which were to be hereafter.* Rev. i. 19.

The LORD begins his charge, with a short but sublime account of himself. *These things, saith he, that holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks.* What a sweet thought to the Church of JESUS in all ages, both as it concerns the Servants of the LORD, whom he dignifies amidst all their unworthiness, with the name of *stars*; and his people, in the midst of whom he here declares himself to walk, as in the midst of *golden Candlesticks.* Reader! do not fail to keep these things always in remembrance! All the Pastors, the HOLY GHOST ordaineth to the Church, however weak in themselves and humble, JESUS calls them *stars*, and He it is that holdeth them up, and blesseth them, both in their own souls, and to the souls of his people. And all his regenerated people, they are golden in CHRIST's view, being *comely in his comeliness, which he hath put upon them*; and His is the office, to supply them with grace, amidst all their own darkness, that as *golden Candlesticks, they may shine as lights in the world.* Ezek. xvi. 14. Philip. ii. 15.

The LORD next proceeds to tell the Church, how perfectly well acquainted he was, with all that concerned his people. *I know thy works.* And this includes, the compleat knowledge the LORD hath, of all their persons; and of all their thoughts, and words, and actions. Oh! what a sweet testimony, in proof of CHRIST's GODHEAD! But what I particularly beg the Reader to observe, in the LORD's charge to this Church, (yea, and all the Churches in this and the following Chapter, for the same observation suits the whole,) is, that though the LORD had somewhat against all, yet he had much more to speak in the favor of all, from their union with, and interest in him. This is a great point to be kept in view, and always highly proper, for every regenerated child of God, to bless God for. From what JESUS here saith, in commendation of the Church at *Ephesus*, it is plain that they were in a state of regeneration. And the God of all grace, which had called them to his eternal glory, by CHRIST JESUS, in that call, and by that quickening their souls into a state of spiritual life, had thereby given them, an earnest of that glory. 2 Cor. v. 5. Ephes. i. 13, 14.

As this is a point of great importance, I beg indulgence to state it somewhat more particularly. When God the HOLY GHOST quickens a sinner, which before was dead in trespasses and sins, by that spiritual life imparted, the child of God is truly and everlastingly united to the LORD JESUS. The HOLY GHOST bears this testimony himself, by his servant *Peter.* According (saith he) *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 unto glory and virtue.*

2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Hence, there is now in this awakened and regenerated new creature, an union with CHRIST, and an interest in CHRIST. He is brought out of darkness and the shadow of death, and being justified freely through the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS, he is habitually in a state of favor, and acceptance with God. This is his high calling in CHRIST. And this is the general frame and state of his mind. But beside this *habit* of grace, in which the soul is formed by regeneration, there is an *actual* state, for the exercise of grace upon the Person of CHRIST, belonging to the believer, and this will be more or less lively, as the LORD the HOLY GHOST calls forth into action, the graces by regeneration, which he hath planted in the soul. Here it was in a defect of this exercise, the Church of *Ephesus* was discovered by CHRIST. On this ground, the LORD reproved them. They had not left CHRIST, neither lost their joy and confidence in CHRIST. For JESUS tells them, that he knew their labors and patience, and their hatred for his sake of false Apostles, and the deeds of the *Nicolaitanes*. But, though they had not lost *all* love to JESUS, yet they had left their *first* love. Reader! do not overlook this, for it is a great point to be well understood in the Church of CHRIST. The LORD's children when called by grace, are *savingly* called, and their spirit being born of the SPIRIT, can die no more. But there may be a great leanness of soul, and there will be, where spiritual strength is not spiritually received, by a life of faith upon JESUS day by day. Hence JESUS, when describing his Church, as branches in himself, the Vine enjoins an abiding in him, that is, a lively acting of faith upon him. John xv. 5. If the soul desires a perpetual spring and summer season, it must be induced from drawing all life, and nourishment, and fruitfulness from CHRIST. *From me*, saith the LORD, *is thy fruit found*. Hosea xiv. 8. But it will be winter in that soul where, though there is no separation from the root, and therefore the tree still lives, the communication is just to keep alive, and that's all. Oh! how needful to feel our daily want of CHRIST, and as constantly to be in the exercise of faith upon CHRIST.

But perhaps it may be said, that in the exhortation CHRIST gives to this Church of *Ephesus*, (and in like manner to all his Churches, under the same circumstances,) to remember and repent, on pain in the neglect of which, the LORD saith, that he will remove the Candlestick out of his place, there should seem, as if a total separation from the LORD might follow. To which the answer is direct. All the word of God, with one voice declares the work of regeneration, is the imparting of spiritual life, which can die no more. The children of God in that sovereign act, are expressly said to be *born again*, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which liveth and abideth for ever*. 1 Pet. i. 23. The *Candlestick*, which is a moveable in God's house, (as it is in a man's house,) may be removed out of its place; and as it was indeed in the instance of this Church at *Ephesus*, but the house itself is founded upon CHRIST, the rock of ages; against which the gates of hell can never prevail. God's children may, and (without his grace keeping them alive, in active fruitfulness, upon CHRIST's Person and righteousness) God's children will, continually feel the workings of sin, in a body which is virtually all sin. But it is CHRIST's special office, to keep all his redeemed from finally falling, and to *present them faultless, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding*

joy. Jude 24. Oh! then for grace, to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

8 ¶ And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Smyrna, the second Church to whom the LORD sent his message, appears to have been not much more than forty miles from *Ephesus*, and neither of them, far remote from *Patmos*. The Epistle to this Church comes now to be considered. Here the LORD takes to himself, in opening his message, those distinguishing perfections of character. *These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive*. Probably the LORD JESUS made choice of these, in a more especial manner, in that he was here arming the Church, against a time of persecution; and therefore, in his own glorious Person, they might be found faithful unto death. By the *Jews* here spoken of, is to be understood, with a special eye to the subject, CHRIST's followers in the regeneration. For, as CHRIST himself was a *Jew* after the flesh, those who professed to be his disciples, were in those days generally called *Jews*. Indeed, we read that *the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*. Acts xi. 26. But it was only in process of time, that the name became universal. Such, however, could only be properly called so, who were regenerated. Let the Reader observe, that CHRIST calls it blasphemy, to take the name without the grace. It is indeed most awful, to find men who are by works, of the synagogue of *Satan*, call themselves Christians!

Let the Reader observe, and observe with thankfulness, how graciously the LORD JESUS limits the power of Satan. *Fear none of these things, which thou shalt suffer!* The devil would have cast them all into hell, if he could. But no! It shall be only some of them, that he shall exercise by captivity, and that not into hell, but only into a prison. And he would have cast them in for ever. But no! It shall only be for *ten days*, that they shall have tribulation. And this, not for *his* triumph, but for the trial of *their* graces. And JESUS, in bidding them *be faithful*, wills them into it. It is, as if the LORD had said

ye shall be faithful. For the crown he promised, was not of doubtful issue. Oh! how sure is it, that the overcomers in CHRIST, having part in the *first* resurrection in grace, shall not be hurt by the *second* death. Rev. xx. 6. LORD! give grace and the hearing ear, to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches!

12 ¶ And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Pergamos, now called by the Turks *Bergamo*, appears to have been about *threescore miles* from *Smyrna*. The features of character which CHRIST here adopts, seem to have been with a design, to intimate that as the Impostor, which in after ages would arise, to oppose the truth of CHRIST, would accomplish his wickedness with the sword, the LORD would only oppose him, with the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the word of God. Ephes. vi. 17. And it is worthy the Reader's remark, that in this Epistle, while the LORD is speaking of those in *Pergamos*, who held the doctrine of *Balaam*, and the doctrine of the *Nicolaitanes*, and tells his people, that if they do not repent, that is, drive them out from their Churches, he will fight *them*; not his people, but *them*, and by that sword of his mouth, namely, his holy word;

convince them of their ungodly deeds, and of all their hard speeches, which they had spoken against him. See Jude 16, and Commentary.

Of the doctrine of the *Nicolaitanes*, we cannot speak particularly. But we find great cause to thank God the HOLY GHOST, for the light this passage, throws over the history of *Balaam*. We should not have known, as we now do, the full infamy of this wretch, but from this account. If the Reader will read the story in the book of *Numbers*, how this man hired himself out, to curse God's people, while God compelled him to bless them, he will discover some very sweet and precious things. He will see, how much the seed of the Serpent, as *Balaam* evidently was, may learn by head knowledge, the truths of God, while like him, in heart they abominate them. And the Reader will further learn, how the LORD is unceasingly watching over his people for good, when they themselves, are most unconscious of it. *Balak* and *Balaam*, were planning and contriving *Israel's* destruction, by all the mock services of religion; while *Israel* lay unconscious in their tents, either of the hatred of *Moab*, or the policy of *Balaam*. Reader! who shall say how often, in ten thousand instances, such things are going on now, in the present hour! Precious JESUS! as oft as I think of it, how sweet is that scripture to my soul, and the assurance of its being minutely carried on, to my heart. Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.

I beg the Reader, before he goes further, to read the history of the Church, concerning this transaction, as it is recorded in the Book of *Numbers*. *Moab* saw *Israel* conquering the nations around. And under an alarm for his own safety, he sent for *Balaam*, a famous Magician from the East, to come and curse *Israel*. The great rewards *Balak* King of *Moab* offered him, soon prompted this man, to hasten to this employment, but he received continued checks from his conscience not to go. We have the account, *Numbers* xxii. xxiii. xxiv. and xxv. Chapters. But this relation of the LORD, in this Chapter of the Revelation, explains what those Chapters in the book of *Numbers*, do not acquaint us with. We here find, that it was *Balaam's* advice to *Balak*, to intice *Israel* to get the displeasure of God, by first tempting their young men, with lustful desires to *Moab's* daughters; and, then, *Moab's* daughters to tempt *Israel* to their sacrifices. Reader! see what our corrupt passions tempt even God's children to commit. And see what a mercy it is, that JESUS watches over his people for good! Well might one of old cry out, and say, *hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!* Psm. cxix. 117. Oh! Sir! how sure a truth it is, that they who are kept, are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. i. 5.

I do not think it necessary, to the Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, to swell these pages, by leading him into enquiries from Ecclesiastical History concerning *Antipas*. That he was a faithful servant of the LORD is certain, from the honorable testimony the LORD hath given of him, and a Martyr to the cause of CHRIST. I would rather raise up a prayer from his faithfulness, and beg of CHRIST to give to all his redeemed, the hidden bread which is CHRIST himself, and the white stone with the new name, written therein, even the LORD our righteousness; to testify whose we are, and whom we serve in the Gospel of God's dear Son! Oh! for grace to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

18 ¶ And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden,

25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,

The *fourth* Church noticed in this Chapter, is that of *Thyatira*. When this Church was formed, and by whom, is not said; but it should seem probable, that there was none there at the time *Paul* first preached at *Philippi*. For ye are told that *Lydia*, a woman of this city was converted to the faith, when at *Philippi*, through the Lord's opening her heart, under the preaching of the word by *Paul*. Acts xvi. 14. In the opening of this Epistle, CHRIST describes the penetrating power of his omniscience, under the similitude of eyes like unto a flame of fire; and his duration and everlasting firmness, in supporting his Church, and going about unceasingly for her welfare, under the figure of feet of fine brass.

JESUS, in all his Epistles, graciously takes notice, of the graces of his people. *Their righteousness is of me saith the LORD*. Isaiah liv. 17. This should not be lost sight of. *He that gives grace, will give glory*. Psm. lxxxiv. 12. And while he noticeth the infirmities of his people, it is blessed to recollect, the LORD's engagements to do them away. We have a beautiful instance of this. Isaiah lvii. 17. The LORD is there speaking of his Church. He declares his wrath. He hides his face. Still the Church goeth on frowardly. Well! what is the issue? Is there no change in the Church? No. Then God will accomplish it. The LORD saith, *I have seen his ways and will heal him*. God's grace shall not be outdone, by man's frowardness. Grace shall triumph, even over abounding transgression.

Who this *Jezebel* is, is not said. If this Epistle be, as some have thought, a prophecy alluding to a different period of the Church, than when *John* wrote, and referred not to the things which then were, but to the things which the LORD said shall be hereafter; then it is possible, that the whore of *Babylon*, concerning whom so much is said, in the after Chapters of this book, is meant. The features here drawn of a prophetess, and the committing fornication and the like, carry no doubt, a strong resemblance to each other. But where things are doubtful, it is prudent not to decide. It is enough, however, for our present purpose, in making improvements from this Chapter, to behold in the history of this Church of *Thyatira*, some of God's dear ones, of whom He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, bears testimony to their faith, and charity, and patience. And that though living in perilous times, when a *Jezebel* is suffered among them, yet they themselves in a state of grace, and their last days, more than the first. One consolation, however, there is in this prophecy, (if it be a prophecy,) concerning the latter-day dispensation; namely, JESUS will cast her into a wretched state of pining desolation; and all her children the LORD will kill. And all the Churches shall know, to their joy, and the LORD's glory, the final overthrow of this Antichrist. And in the same hour, the destruction of CHRIST's enemies, and of his Church are destroyed, the LORD will give to his people power over them. *The God of peace will bruise Satan under their feet shortly*. Rom. xvi. 20. Yea, CHRIST who is the morning star, will be their everlasting light, their GOD, their glory. Isaiah lx. 19. Rev. xxii. 16. Reader! again let you and I look up for grace, to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou glorious LORD! thou Almighty Head of thy Church, and people. Blessed be thy Name, for those gracious messages, to thy redeemed. Truly, LORD, amidst all their spots and defilements, we behold thy mercy over them, and thy grace towards them. Thou bearest testimony to their faith and patience, for all that is wrought in them is thy grace and of thee, have they received it. And yet, Jesus graciously beholds it, and speaks of it, as their own. LORD! give thy Churches, under every state, grace, to be looking wholly unto thee, and to know thee, under all these distinguishing characters. It is thine, O LORD, to hold thy ministers, as stars in thy right hand, and to walk in the favorite haunts of thy Churches, as amidst the golden Candlesticks, thy people. Thou art the first and the last in all the designs of JEHOVAH; and the first and the last, yea, the whole sum and substance of everlasting joy to all thy people! Thou art the bright, and the morning-star, the sure harbinger of everlasting day, and in the souls of thy people, thou arisest when the Day-spring from on high visitest them. Be thou, LORD, my light, my life, my everlasting portion, that amidst all the darkness of the present state of the world, in thy light I may see light, and walk under the light of thy countenance for ever!

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the remaining Messages of CHRIST to the Churches, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. JESUS manifests his Grace in the sweet Promise of coming and supping with his People.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent, if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which

have not defiled their garments : and they shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy :

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment : and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If, as some have supposed, the former Church-state of *Thyatira*, had reference to *Papal Rome*, and the *Jezebel* there spoken of with her fornications, alluded to the Whore of mystical *Babylon*; then it will follow, that the reformation was that period when the scripture was fulfilled, which describes her impoverished state, expressed under the figure of casting her into a bed of sickness, and killing her children. And then from the same circumstances it will follow, that this Epistle to *Sardis*, is directed to the Church of the present hour; and we are in the *Sardis* state. But we have seen, upon many occasions, the calculations of great and studious men, notwithstanding the most plausible appearances, found to be wrong; that I am free to confess, I am not much disposed to give credence to any. So incompetent are we to judge, by the mere appearances of things, that while a few years ago, the Reformed Church of CHRIST in this land, was led from apparent signs, to hope Antichrist in the heresy of *Papal Rome* was dwindling away, we now behold the Beast propped up, with more human power than she hath had for more than *two Centuries* past. And together with her revival, another Antichrist in the denial of CHRIST'S GODHEAD, and now, unrestrained by law, is coming forth, with an uncovered brow in our land. So that while those learned and studious men, speak of the present day of the Church being the *Sardis* state, and that this will shortly be succeeded by the *Philadelphian*; when universal love, and universal light and knowledge, will be diffused through the earth; I read those scriptures differently, and rather am inclined to conclude, very awful events will take place in the Church of CHRIST, before those bright periods come on. But with whomsoever the truth is, one thing is certain; what the LORD here saith to the Church of *Sardis*, opens a very blessed subject of improvement at all times, and especially in the present hour. And I humbly conceive, it will be more suited to the object of a *Poor Man's Commentary*, to seek grace from the LORD, to draw improvements for our present use, than enter into enquiries of what may be hereafter, with which we have no concern. What the LORD said to *Daniel*, suits all of *Daniel's* faith; *Go thy way till the end be. Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.* Dan. xii. 13.

Sardis was the chief city of *Lydia*, but now it is a mere village. Its distance was not above thirty miles, or thereabouts, from *Thyatira*. So that those places, which were rather in flourishing circumstances at the time the LORD JESUS sent these Epistles to them, have not a vestige remaining, and are all of them awfully under the delusion of

the Impostor of the East. Reader! what a precious consideration it is to my soul, in the moment of writing, that amidst all changes of places, or nations, or men, or things, JESUS changeth not. Neither his Person, nor his love to his Church, can admit the smallest alteration; *he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

How blessedly the LORD JESUS begins his Epistle to this Church. *These things, saith he that hath the seven SPIRITS of GOD, and the seven stars.* Here the LORD assumes to himself a sovereignty suited to his Almighty character, and which can be said by no other but by Him *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.* Coloss. ii. 9. By the seven SPIRITS of GOD, as hath been before observed, (see Chap. i.) is meant the HOLY GHOST in his sevenfold gifts and graces. And, therefore, the LORD JESUS, speaking as Mediator, describes his fulness for his body the Church, *GOD giving not the SPIRIT by measure unto him.* John iii. 34. And by having the *seven stars* is meant, that JESUS it is which holds his servants whom he hath appointed to minister in his name. Sweet thought to the faithful, under pastors in the LORD's house! Oh! how blessed to be upheld, taught, guided, sent, blessed, and owned by Him!

If we are under the *Sardis* state, it is a very humbling state. JESUS saith, *I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead!* Reader! if the LORD spake of us *nationally*, bad enough as that would be, yet the true Church of CHRIST might find comfort, that amidst the mere *profession* of the Gospel, by those who know nothing of the Gospel but in the name, the LORD's people *possessing* CHRIST would learn rightly to estimate their privileges. But it is the general state of the Church, in Gospel Churches, of whom CHRIST speaks. Numbers there are who take up with a name to live, who never were regenerated, and consequently are still *dead in trespasses and sins.* And others, who, though quickened by the HOLY GHOST into a new and spiritual life, yet are such babes in the life of grace, as to remain in the weakness and imbecility of childhood the greater part of their days.

That the Church, yea, the true Church of *Sardis*, had many of her members in this state is evident, from what the LORD JESUS immediately added, *Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.* Now, here we find, that though so weak and languishing that, to all outward appearances, they were ready to die, yet not dead. There is a mighty difference between spiritually dying and spiritual death. The *former* may be, and too often is, the case of GOD's children. The *latter* can only be said of such as are still in the *Adam*-nature of the fall, unquickened by the HOLY GHOST, and, therefore, *dead in trespasses and sins.* Reader! do mark the different features of character. Painful as it is, and reproachful as it is to a child of GOD, whom the LORD hath regenerated, and called by grace to live in the neglect of ordinances, the throne of CHRIST, reading the scriptures, and the various ways which the HOLY GHOST is pleased to appoint, for keeping up communion in the soul; yet death and dying are two very different things. The *latter* may be, and certainly will be restored, through the favor and life-giving principle of Him that quickeneth. The *former* hath no part nor lot in the matter, nor ever will, notwithstanding the most flaming profession, except the LORD the HOLY GHOST quicken. It is only by

regeneration, or the new-birth, that the child of GOD enters into CHRIST's sheepfold. But *he that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.* John x. 1, 2.

Reader! do not overlook what the LORD JESUS here saith, in enforcing *watchfulness, to hold fast, and to repent*, in every instance of a truly regenerated child of GOD, who by the new-birth hath *received and heard*. Oh! how necessary in the present awful day of much profession, must it be in every child of GOD, to give all diligence, as the HOLY GHOST commands, *to make our calling and election sure*. See 2 Pet. i. 10. And what a blessed thing it is, whether the present day of the Church be, or be not, under this *Sardis* state, that JESUS hath graciously added, for to keep up the spirits of his true children, that *even in Sardis he hath a few names*, that is, a few persons, *which have not defiled their garments*; that is, have not polluted the robes of JESUS' righteousness, in patching them up with a pretended righteousness of their own. Oh! how blessedly JESUS speaks of them. They shall walk with me, saith the LORD. Yes! they do walk *with CHRIST*, and by the strength of CHRIST. For so the HOLY GHOST gives testimony of them. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* Psalm lxxxix. 16. And the LORD declares them *worthy*. For they are accepted in the Beloved. Ephes. i. 6.

What JESUS saith of coming as *a thief in the night*, means, the suddenness, and unexpectedness of his coming, at the moment he comes. But this coming to his people, though sudden to all such as are not always on the look-out for his coming, is not meant in a way of judgment, to condemn them, much less to destroy. The LORD saith, he will *correct his children, when they forsake his law, and walk not in his judgment: nevertheless his loving kindness he will not utterly take from him, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.* Psm. lxxxix. 30—37. And in this very Chapter, (verse 10.) *he will keep his people from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world.* Reader! what saith your heart's experience to these things? If this be the *Sardis* state, under which you and I this day are; if JESUS gives this account of it; if, amidst the wonderful relations we hear of, and meet with, every day, the compassing sea and land to make proselytes; if they that have such a name to live, are yet dead before GOD; if *some* are totally dead in trespasses and sins, mere professors without life; if *others*, who have been quickened, have need to strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die; and, if the LORD hath a few, even in *Sardis*, who, by living to him, and living wholly upon him, the SON of GOD declares to be worthy, and shall walk with him; pause, and ask your own heart, to which class do you belong? Oh! LORD! give the hearing ear, to all thy redeemed, that they may *hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches!*

7 ¶ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true: he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works; behold, I have set before

thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from my God : and *I will write upon him my new name*.

13 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Philadelphia was another of the cities of this province in *Asia*. It is now in the hand of the Turks. But though it bears by them the name of the *fair* city, yet, if we may credit Travellers, it is wretchedly inhabited. In distance it is nearly *thirty miles* from *Thyatira*. Our LORD begins this Epistle with those distinguishing characters he assumes to himself, and by which he is personally known, throughout the whole scriptures. *These things, saith he that is holy, he that is true. He that hath the key of David. He that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth.* In whatever point of view we contemplate our LORD, as GOD, one with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, or as GOD-Man Mediator, he is only holy, and true. *Such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* Heb. vii. 26. And what tends to endear this part of our LORD's character the more to his people is, that in this holiness and truth, all his chosen are interested. So GOD the FATHER, at the first, chose the Church, that it should be in him, *holy, and without blame, before him in love.* Ephes. i. 4. So that He, that is, *the true and faithful Witness*, is also the holiness of his people. He is their *sanctification and wisdom* ; 1 Cor. i. 30. they are sanctified *in him, and from him, and by him.* Sweet consideration to the faith-

ful in CHRIST JESUS! And by the key of the house of *David*, considering *David* as a type of CHRIST, and the Church CHRIST's house; Heb. iii. 6. it is his office, both to open and shut, and to none beside doth this belong. This was predicted of CHRIST, under the character of *Eliakim*, by one of the Prophets; and CHRIST confirmed it, in the first opening of this vision to *John*. Chap. i. 18. Isaiah xxii. 20 to the end. Reader! pass not away, from this precious scripture, without first bending the knee of adoration, love, and praise, to this Almighty SAVIOR, at whose girdle hang all the keys of government, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. He hath the key to open to all appointments, *to give eternal life to as many as the FATHER hath given him*, to gather his people, to pardon, to cleanse, to justify, to sanctify, to glorify them. None can open the grave to his saints, but JESUS. And when he opens, to each and every one he saith, as he did to *Jacob*, *fear not to go down into Egypt, I will go with thee*. Gen. xlv. 3, 4. None can open heaven but JESUS. None cast into hell but JESUS. Oh! the preciousness of knowing Him, and his Almighty power; and, that that power is everlastingly in exercise, for blessing and protecting his people!

The LORD having made himself known to his Church of *Philadelphia*, by the special, and personal features of his character, next proceeds to inform them of his knowledge of them, of his grace towards them, in setting before them an open door which none can shut, and of his securing them in the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world; and of his making all their enemies to come and bend before their feet, and to know that JESUS hath loved them.

The *good works* JESUS speaks of, are the graces of the SPIRIT, producing in them faith, and love, and trust in CHRIST. And by an *open door*, it should seem to imply, the freeness the LORD would give, under this time-state of the Church, to the preaching of the pure Gospel. And, indeed, what is said here concerning the Church of *Philadelphia*, carries with it an assurance, of a greater out-pouring of the SPIRIT, and a greater in-gathering of CHRIST's scattered ones, than in any other period of the Gospel, from the first descent of the HOLY GHOST at the day of Pentecost. The coming of the synagogue of *Satan*, in them that say they are *Jews*, and are not; evidently means a great work of conversion by the LORD's grace, upon those that before persecuted the Church of CHRIST. By the synagogue of *Satan*, is intended those of the LORD's children, which, while in the blindness of nature, and dead in trespasses and sins, were in his service, and wore his livery, and did his work; but now, by regenerating grace, were called out of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear SON. But, by coming and worshipping before the Church's feet, doth not mean worshipping the Church, for the Church is no object of worship, but worshipping, *with* the Church, the LORD; and to know, that the whole Church share in the common love of GOD her SAVIOR. So that those converts from *Satan*, will know their joint interest with the Church in CHRIST.

The glorious things here described, of being kept from the hour of temptation, while the whole carnal world is involved in it; of overcoming in, and by CHRIST; being made a pillar in God's temple, and having GOD's name, yea, CHRIST's new name, which, as Mediator, by his righteousness and blood-shedding, he hath purchased; the going

no more out, and the like; these are allusions, not to the Church in glory above, but to the period of triumph below. For the LORD saith, *let no man take thy crown*. The heavenly crown cannot be supposed as meant, for who in heaven of the ungodly shall be there to take it. But it means the faith of assurance here below. *Hold that fast*, saith CHRIST, *which thou hast*; meaning your consciousness, that it is yours, in CHRIST. Faith gives present right, though not present possession. It becomes a reversionary interest, perfectly sure, and perfectly certain, after death. Faith, therefore, looks at it as such, and grasps it, as certain, as the heir of an inheritance, when he shall attain his majority, and is got out of his nonage. Reader! what saith your experience to these things? If the LORD the SPIRIT hath regenerated you from the *Adam-nature* of the fall, in that new birth; you are begotten to this lively hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead to this inheritance *incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*. The thing is certain, and the interpretation sure. Oh! the unspeakable mercy! There is no suspense, no doubt, no peradventures. A regenerated child of GOD, is in no uncertainty, as to the final issue. If CHRIST and his righteousness be mine now, it will be then, and then for ever!

One word more, as to the period of this *Philadelphian* state. Here I presume not to speak in the least decidedly. In the general observations at the opening of this mysterious Book of GOD, I have assigned my reasons, why the LORD hath been pleased to keep the time a secret, until the events be accomplished. And the more I ponder the subject, the more I am convinced that these things are hidden from the Church generally speaking; though, as in the instance of *Daniel*, a child of GOD, here and there, may have secret intimations given him. See Dan. ix. throughout. And, with respect to carnal men, who have presumed to write on the prophecies of Scripture, unenlightened by grace, untaught of GOD; we have seen what awful business they have made of it. *They run upon the thick bosses of GOD's bucklers*. Job xv. 26. From such men, every one truly taught of GOD, cannot but turn away. Whether the Church of CHRIST be under the *Sardis*-state in the present hour, how far that state is advanced, whether this *Philadelphian* is to succeed it, and how near at hand, I am humbly inclined to believe, no man knoweth these things. As to the features of the Church of *Sardis* being suited to the present hour in many particulars, this may safely be allowed, and yet no conclusion therefrom drawn, how much of it is run out, and how much longer it hath to last. And, though the Church of *Sardis* may be said to be more like the present state of CHRIST's Church in the earth, than any of the former; yet, it should be observed, that there is not one of the foregoing, but what in it may be discovered spots like our own. In a word, I may be singular, and I may be wrong; but, as I solemnly believe, that there never was a period since the emancipation of this kingdom from Popery, in which vital godliness was at a lower ebb than the present, I am inclined to think, that, before the *Philadelphian*-state, as here described, comes on, there will be a sifting time. Amos ix. 8—10. Then, if the LORD so appoint, may succeed the blessed promises that follow, verse 11 to the end; which are in correspondence to the *Philadelphian*-state, as here described. But the *scena ante penultima*, that is, the scene before the last,

will be perilous. So CHRIST seems to intimate, in closing up the *Sardis*-state. *I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.* Verse 3.

14 ¶ And unto the angel of the church of the *Laodiceans* write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.

20 ¶ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

We are here brought acquainted with the LORD's Epistle to the seventh Church, *Laodicea*. We have a certain account of this Church in the Epistle of *Paul* to the *Colossians*; for he thrice makes mention of it. *Coloss. ii. 1. and iv. 13, 15.* Its situation was in the province of *Asia*. Like all the former, it is occupied at present by the *Turks*. If, as this Epistle is placed last in point of order, it be thereby meant to say, its period will be last, and succeed the Church of *Philadelphia*; we may generally learn from it, that the glorious spiritual

reign of CHRIST, during the *Philadelphian*-state, will be succeeded with an awful lukewarm, and lifeless condition, under this *Laodicean*; and afford a striking display of the LORD's grace, and their undeservings.

The LORD opens this Epistle, as he hath all the foregoing, with ushering in his message with the proclamations of his sovereignty and power. He here calls himself *the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God*. Now all these are distinguishing names, belonging only to the SON of GOD; as GOD in the first of them, and as GOD-MAN Mediator in the two last. The Old Testament scripture, Isaiah lxxv. 16. declares, that *whosoever blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the Amen; that is, the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the Amen; that is, the God of truth*. Every one knows, that is acquainted with the original, that this is the rendering of it. Now, in the great acts of blessing, or appealing for the confirmation of truth, these distinguishing acts belong only to GOD. And hence CHRIST, when calling himself *Amen*, plainly proves his GODHEAD. But *the faithful and true witness, and the beginning of the creation of GOD*, are features of character which belong to him, as GOD-MAN Mediator. And by both these, he hath demonstrated his twofold nature, most plainly and blessedly. If the Reader will turn to Coloss. i. 15, and following verses, and the *Poor Man's Commentary* thereupon; it will supersede the necessity of my enlarging upon them, in this place.

JESUS having opened his Epistle to the Church of *Laodicea* with the glories of his names and authority, next begins to speak on the subject for which he sent the message to the Church. And, in the description which the LORD hath given of the state of this Church, it is difficult to know which to admire most, the LORD's compassion, or their awful degeneracy. Considered as the last Church which CHRIST would have upon earth, it is truly distressing. Most of the former had spots upon them, but this of *Laodicea* was over-run with a gangrene. And, what made it, if possible, yet more awful, she is represented as speaking peace to herself, as needing nothing; while, in CHRIST's eye, she was every thing the reverse, and drenched in the deepest poverty. Reader! how oft have I seen in sick rooms, and dying chambers, deceptions of this kind, both spiritually and bodily. It is indeed no uncommon thing in life, by reason of this self-deception, for those who have the spots of death upon them, to be talking of a speedy recovery. And, while every looker-on, but themselves, beholds death approaching; the poor unconscious man himself believes it not, till he drops into eternity. And what it is by the body, so is it by the soul! But, oh! how much more horrible! to behold a sinner without a single work of grace upon his soul; no sense of sin, no knowledge of salvation, ignorant of the plague of his own heart, ignorant of the love and grace of GOD, a stranger to the Person, work, righteousness, and blood-shedding of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and, with respect to the regenerating mercy of GOD the SPIRIT, as it concerns himself, he hath not so much as heard, whether there be any HOLY GHOST! Reader! how readest thou? What think *you* of these things?

It appears from this message to the Church of the *Laodiceans*, that, notwithstanding the great mass of the people, who professed to be apart in the visible Church, were in this awful state; and concern-

ing whom JESUS declared, that *he would spue them out of his mouth*; yet the LORD had a people among them, for whom he sent this Epistle, and to whom he gave counsel, to buy of him gold and white raiment, and eye-salve. There is somewhat very sweet and endearing in this counsel of JESUS, who is *the Wonderful Counsellor*, and in *whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Isaiah ix. 6. Coloss. ii. 3. It holds forth to my view, so very interesting an account of the wisdom, grace, and loveliness of JESUS, that I would beg the Reader's indulgence to dwell a moment upon it.

By *gold tried in the fire*, can mean no other than CHRIST himself. He hath been tried, indeed, in the fire of every exercise, when for his people he bore the sins and sorrows of his redeemed, in his own body, on the tree. As the Church's Surety, he stood exposed to the fire of God's wrath as a burnt-offering; and all the fiery darts of Satan, which in the days of his temptation he endured. And, by *white raiment*, we may well conceive, the LORD means that spotless robe of righteousness, which on the cross he wrought out, for the clothing all his people. And by *the eye-salve to anoint the eyes* of his spiritually blind, can mean no other than the unction of the HOLY GHOST, by which, in regenerating grace, in the new birth, and in divine teaching, the Church are brought to know all things. I John ii. 20, 27. And it is not the smallest beauty of this scripture, in the counsel of CHRIST, that what JESUS calls to buy of him, means *without money and without price*. It is all a free gift, free grace, free love. And he that counsels his people thus to buy, gives them the disposition how to buy; namely, coming to him to receive, not to give. The precious things JESUS sells are too precious for purchase. *If a man would give all the substance of his house* for this love of God in CHRIST, it would utterly be contemned. Song viii. 7. Moreover: these incalculably great blessings, have all been purchased before, by JESUS himself, and with no less a price than that of his own blood. So that, as he bought them for his people, so he counsels them to come and buy of him, in this unusual way of buying; not only without money, but without any thing; neither credit, nor promise, nor deserving. Was there ever heard of such a free grace market as this? Reader! Shall you and I take the counsel of this wonderful Counsellor? Shall we seek Him, as our true riches? Accept his white raiment for our only covering before God, for acceptance? And shall we bless him, for the Unction of his HOLY SPIRIT, in anointing our eyes, to behold thereby, our nothingness, and his All-sufficiency? Shall we hesitate to accept the free gift, and the free grace of God in CHRIST JESUS? Shall we indeed, be so proud, as rather to purchase, than receive free, rather come before God in our rags, than in the robe of JESUS' righteousness? And all this, at a time when we know, and are told, that JESUS is too rich to need any thing of us; and his only motive for selling in the way he doth, is to shew us, that he needs not us, but that our blessedness he hath in view, and will thereby promote his own glory in our happiness?

This verse, of JESUS telling his Church of his love, in rebukes and chastenings, comes in very blessedly after the former; because, whatever exercises the LORD calls his people to, he will enable them to bear up under: and, having given them gold tried in the fire, and white raiment, and eye-salve, meaning himself, with all his graces,

and gifts, and righteousness, in the HOLY GHOST; afflictions in the world ought not to be regarded. Indeed, they are so many sweet and precious love-tokens of his favor. James i. 2, 12.

I admire the love-calls of CHRIST; and the method here spoken of, by which JESUS makes them known to his people. It is a sweet verse indeed, of the LORD JESUS, in which, as we commonly say, every word tells. The SON of GOD a Petitioner at the heart of his people. And the account is ushered in, as it well may, with a *behold!* A note of admiration, that JESUS, the LORD of heaven and earth, should thus ask an entrance! Moreover: where is he? He saith, *I stand at the door and knock.* Marvellous condescension! JESUS stands without! He that by right of creation, redemption, marriage, purchase, conquests, grace, might command all gates to open at his approach, is nevertheless an humble suitor, and stands without. Oh! must not every one that hears of such grace, or that is conscious of such unparalleled mercy, be constrained to cry out, with one of old: *Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without.* Gen. xxiv. 31.

But, observe not only the Redeemer's posture, but the Redeemer's method, to gain admission. He knocks at the door of our heart. And how is this done? Oh! who shall count over, or sum up, all the love-calls of CHRIST. By his word, by ordinances, by means of grace, by afflictions, wants, sicknesses, sorrows, bereaving providences in our friends, the near prospect, as it should seem, of death to ourselves; the LORD knocks, and knocks again and again, and rings loud peals through all the chambers of our consciences; all which we totally disregard, hear, but turn from: neither can the LORD, by soothing or by threatening, by judgments or by mercies, have the least effect upon our stony hearts, until He himself *put in his hand by the hole of the door*, opened to his own entrance, and *caused our bowels to be moved for him.* So said the Church of old! And so, blessed be God, I know. Song v. 2, 3, 4. Reader! what saith your heart to these things? Have you known JESUS at the door? Have you heard his calls? Hath he made you *willing in the day of his power?* Psm. cx. 3.

Let some child of God, that knows what supping with JESUS means, describe those words of the Redeemer. For, though I trust I know well what it is; yet, sure I am, angels are not competent to describe it. The HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to tell the people somewhat of it, in her love songs, when she describes JESUS as her Husband, bringing her into his banqueting house, and his banner over her was love: Song ii. 4. but, oh! how far short all language is, to convey the full meaning of such unequalled joy? Our poor, cold, and lifeless nature, by reason of that body of sin and death we carry about with us, renders us but too often insensible to the visits of JESUS. Often he comes, looks in at the window, shews himself at the lattices of ordinances; and we, alas! sometimes hardly glance at him, before our thoughts run away to other objects. But, very sure I am, if our souls were but more alive to the visits of JESUS, we should find that this promise of JESUS would be often fulfilled, and night by night He would come with such love, and bring of that love with him, which is better than wine to make the feast with, and in such fulness, as to be both our company, our food, our bread, and our wine. Song v. 1.

I must not close our view of this Epistle, before that I have first taken notice of what the LORD JESUS hath said of his throne, and of his FATHER's throne. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my FATHER in his throne.* I pray the Reader to observe the distinction which is here made, in what is said of these thrones. The throne of JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, is the throne of the essential GODHEAD. Here, on this throne, none but God himself in his threefold character of Person sits. Nothing created can possibly ascend here. But there is another throne, namely, the Mediatorial throne. And this belongs to CHRIST, as God-Man. And JESUS, having married our nature, and thereby having brought that nature into union with himself, brings his redeemed into a participation of this throne. Therefore, CHRIST saith, *To him that overcometh*, that is, to every one truly regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, whom God my FATHER hath given to me, and whom I have betrothed to myself, and redeemed by my blood and righteousness; having thus overcome sin and Satan, he shall sit with me on my Mediatorial throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my FATHER in his throne of GODHEAD.

Reader! Once more, as we close this Chapter, and with it the LORD's Epistles to the Churches, we are reminded of the hearing ear. *He that hath an ear! LORD, give the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, that we may hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.*

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED LORD of thy Churches! Give thy servants grace to praise thee for such love-tokens of thy favor, that in thine infinite condescension thou didst send those gracious messages to thy Churches; and still more, didst cause them to be handed down to us, even to the present hour. LORD! we see enough to be humbled to the dust in all. There are now the same features of character among thy people. Like *Ephesus*, too many of thy dear children have left their first love. Like *Smyrna*, we have the blasphemy among us of those who profess the truth, but are not. Like *Pergamos*, we have men of corrupt minds, who follow doctrines in head-knowledge, but void of heart-influence: and, like *Thyatira*, we have multitudes now in our land, who not only suffer, but follow the doctrine of *Jezebel*, and are running back to the idolatry of false worship. LORD JESUS! do thou purge the land! And amidst the *Sardis* state, if we are in that state, prepare us for the more glorious one that is to follow, under the *Philadelphian*; and bring on the great day of our God. LORD! make it a short work among all *Laodicean* spirits, and hasten that blessed period, when JESUS will close up all in glory.

In the mean time, blessed LORD JESUS, be not sparing of the sweet visits of thy love to thy people! Oh! for grace to hear thy voice, at the door of our hearts, and to receive CHRIST to his holy supper, and to be among those that eat bread in thy kingdom. Even so, Amen. The LORD be praised for these sweet Epistles to his Churches.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

At this Chapter, we enter upon those Prophecies which relate to the Church of God, from the Ascension of CHRIST, going on through a regular Progression, to the Descension of CHRIST, at the great Day of God. John is here introduced into the Visions concerning those wonderful Events. He is led to behold the Throne of God, and the glorified Inhabitants of Heaven round the Throne.

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Here is the opening of the second vision, with which *John* was favored. This Chapter appears to have been intended, as preparatory to what was to follow; not unlike the first. In the first Chapter, *John* had that glorious vision of the *Person* of his LORD. The next Chapter, CHRIST's message began, to the Churches. So here, *John* hath in this Chapter, a solemn and glorious vision, of the parties concerned in what was to follow; and then, in the succeeding Chapter, the business for which the Apostle was favored with the vision.

There is here in this Chapter, a view of the LORD's Church, with the LORD himself presiding over it. And one of the most solemn representations which can be. *John* begins it with observing, that after he had received from the LORD his messages to the seven Churches, and, perhaps, for ought we know to the contrary, delivered them; *he looked, and behold a door was opened in the heavens.* By which is meant, that his spiritual faculties were called forth into exercise, and, looking up, he saw heaven opened to his view, as though he had beheld through it, this wonderful, and supernatural sight, which he hereafter describes. The first thing after looking up which attracted his attention was the sound of a voice, inviting him to raise his affections above the earth to heaven; and a promise accompanied the invitation, that he that invited him would shew him things which should be hereafter. And immediately *John* found himself, as he had upon the former vision, in the Spirit; meaning, under divine influences. See Chap. i. 10. Reader! pause, and do not

fail to observe, how soon the LORD the HOLY GHOST works upon the spirits of the people. No sooner did *John* hear the voice, but immediately he was in the Spirit.

The throne which *John* saw, and upon which One sat, hath been considered, as representing the Unity of the Divine Nature, in his threefold character of Persons. And the Jasper, Sardine, and Emerald stones, are supposed to be the representation of the Threefold nature of the GODHEAD. But it is observable, that though the brilliancy of these stones set forth the splendor of shining glory, yet no Personal appearance was seen. *No man hath seen God at any time.* John i. 18. In relation to the Rainbow round about the throne, there can be no question to whom this refers, because the Rainbow, from the very first Covenant of grace made with *Noah*, was declared by the LORD himself, to be the token of the everlasting Covenant. There are so many very blessed things connected with this token of the Rainbow, that I beg the Reader's indulgence, to dwell upon the subject somewhat more particularly.

And, *first*. Let it be considered, how is the Rainbow formed? It is the effect from the sun's beams upon the watery clouds. And CHRIST, the Sun of righteousness, forms, by his shining, the whole effects of the Covenant of grace, upon all that is cloudy, in our nature. So that JESUS is the true Rainbow, of which that beautiful arch, formed in the heavens, is but a type or shadow.

Secondly. As the Rainbow in nature, is held forth by the LORD, to be an everlasting memorial of God's Covenant with the earth, that God will no more destroy the earth by a deluge: so CHRIST, the Rainbow in grace, is God's memorial, and man's confidence, that amidst all the deluge of sin, God will not destroy his people, for whom JESUS is the Covenant.

Thirdly. As the Rainbow in nature hath been in all ages the token of God's Covenant for the earth's safety, when the LORD brings a cloud over the earth, and the bow is seen in the cloud; Gen. ix. 13, 14. so here, the throne of God which *John* saw, was encircled with the Bow, to intimate its everlasting abiding, like to the throne itself; being fixed of an everlasting green like an Emerald, to shew its unfading nature, and its never-ceasing efficacy.

Fourthly. That this Rainbow was, and is CHRIST, is evident, for *John* saw CHRIST upon another occasion, as a mighty Angel come down from heaven, *clothed with a rainbow, and his face was as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.* Chap. x. 1. So *John* had seen him before. Rev. i. 15, 16. It is the peculiar prerogative of CHRIST, to shine as the sun upon his people, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon them.

Fifthly. *John* tells the Church in the fifth verse, that out of the throne proceeded *lightnings, and thunderings, and voices*. Perhaps these were meant to shew, the many dispensations of the LORD, both to the Church, and to the world. But whatever dispensations come from the throne, they must all pass through the Rainbow, for the Rainbow was all round the throne, so that nothing could be manifested but through it. And this, very blessedly teacheth the Church, how everlastingly safe all CHRIST's redeemed must be, since nothing can come to pass, but it must pass his hands. And on the other hand, how awful to his enemies, since CHRIST is in all dispensations, and nothing can escape him.

Lastly. While the Rainbow in the heavens shadows CHRIST, and is designed to point to him, for which purpose God hangs out the Bow, it doth but half resemble CHRIST, for it only forms an half-circle in the beautiful Arch we behold. But JESUS encircles the whole throne. Neither is it possible for God to look any way to his people, but *in* him, and *through* him. Oh! the blessedness to behold the LORD JEHOVAH, by faith upon his throne; and that throne encircled with mercy, in the Person and glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

4 ¶ And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 ¶ And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 ¶ The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

I would speak with all possible reverence, on a subject so infinitely sublime, as the one contained in this Chapter; and desire, rather to propose all I have to offer, by way of inquiry, than in a single instance to speak decidedly. But I venture to believe, that as at this Chapter, in the second vision *John* was favored with, the LORD was about to commit to him, certain prophecies, which his Church would have unfolded and accomplished, in the different ages, from that time, to the consummation of all things; the LORD in this Chapter was preparing his servant's mind for that subject, by the solemn representation of what is here delivered. The LORD therefore begins with an account of the throne of GOD, similar to that of Isaiah vi. where all the sanctities of heaven are around. It is the Church in which GOD erects his throne, therefore we find Elders worshipping before the throne, and though the song they sing is not recorded here, yet it is in the next Chapter, ascribing their redemption to CHRIST. Chap. v. 9. Now this could not be the song of Angels, but men. Hence, those Elders are men.

And it is as evident, that this representation is to set forth that Church upon earth; for the sea of glass, like unto crystal, intimated the fountain opened for sin, and uncleanness, and which are needed not in heaven. And the seven lamps, figurative of the sevenfold gifts of GOD the SPIRIT, are specially for the LORD's people in this life. They are no longer required as principles of regeneration, and quickening in the state of perfection above. Not that the HOLY GHOST through all eternity, ceaseth his sweet influences, either to the Person of the glorious Head of his Church, or his members; but then not in a way as here below, of regenerating, illuminating, convincing, and converting mercy.

Concerning the Elders, and the four Beasts, there needs not to speak of them particularly. The HOLY GHOST hath not thought proper to give the Church deeper views, into the mysteries of the kingdom, than is necessary; and to attempt lifting the veil higher, would be both presumptuous and unprofitable. It is enough for us to understand, that they belong to the Church of GOD: more than this, we need not.

But, Reader! here is enough to gratify our best intellectual faculties, and to employ our contemplation for ever, in attending to the Hymn of Heaven, sung by the whole Choir, the Church. Oh! what unknown glories, in the holiness, greatness, and eternity of the whole Persons of the GODHEAD! This thrice repeating of *JEHOVAH's* holiness, is striking. All GOD's perfections and attributes, are standards of character, distinguishing the LORD from all his creatures. But yet, we never meet with any other prerogative of *JEHOVAH*, trebled as this is of his holiness. We do not say *faithful, faithful, faithful*, LORD GOD Almighty! I do not presume to explain. But I think it proper to notice it. Oh! for grace, to join the whole body the Church in the same hymn of praise, till we all come before the throne, in one full body of the redeemed, to praise GOD and the LAMB for evermore! Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! Let us seek grace, that, like the beloved Apostle, we may by faith hear the sweet voice, saying, Come up hither, and

like him, may be immediately in the SPIRIT, when we come to visions and revelations of the LORD!

Oh! LORD the HOLY GHOST! as it is thy blessed office to glorify the LORD JESUS; do thou for ever glorify him to the view of thy people, that as oft as thou liftest the eye, and the soul to look to the throne; oh! to see the LORD JESUS, as the Rainbow encircling the throne, and, as GOD the FATHER's bow, the everlasting token of GOD's good will to man. Yea, Almighty FATHER, behold thy Church in *Him*, through *Him*, and by *Him*, as our everlasting security and portion. And let thy Church begin the Hymn, and all thy redeemed Elders and Men, follow in one vast song in the same, to celebrate the wonders of thy grace. And what a song will that be finally in heaven, when all the redeemed from every nation, country, and clime, shall be assembled before thee, to sing to the LORD's glory for evermore?

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The preceding Chapter, having in Vision opened Heaven; this prosecutes the same Subject, in describing what took place, when the Hymn of the Church had celebrated the LORD's Glory. Here is an Account of a Book with Seven Seals. None was found worthy to open it but the LAMB. The Events which followed.

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within, and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

Perhaps there never was a subject, so admirably calculated to call up the attention, as the contents of this Chapter. Let the Reader recollect the state of *John's* mind. He tells us, that he was in the spirit. He relates, that a door was opened to his view in heaven. He describes, as far as he was able, some of the glorious objects which he saw. He heard thunderings and voices, with lightnings proceeding out of the throne of GOD and the LAMB. And he heard the hymn of adoration, which was offered to the LORD, from the host before the throne. Such were the things related in the foregoing Chapter. The mind of the Apostle must have been wrapt up in the most sublime meditation, at the time when what is related in this Chapter began to take place. And *John* hath given the particulars in this chapter in the most striking manner.

First. He saw a Book in the hand of him that sat on the throne, sealed with seven seals. Its being so closely sealed, seemed to imply the secrecy of it. And there can be no doubt, what the contents were; for the secrecy of it, and the hand of him in whom it was, plainly shews, that it was the decree of God, respecting his Church. I think a beautiful light is thrown upon this scripture, in the second Psalm. For no sooner had God, as is there represented, set CHRIST upon his throne, as King in *Zion*, than he saith, *I will declare the decree.* Now as none but CHRIST could open the Book, and declare the decree, as this Chapter shews; it must follow, that it is CHRIST which is represented in this scripture, and none other. See Psm. ii. 6, 7.

Secondly. The proclamation made upon this occasion appears to have been done, for the manifestation of the greater glory of CHRIST. All the creation is called upon to know, who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof. Not simply who was *able*, but who was *worthy*. The inability of Angels is implied, as well as their unworthiness, for a strong Angel made the proclamation, and consequently he knew no Angel, either *able* or *worthy*. Reader! do not overlook, while reading this scripture, what is said of Jesus, that *verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* Heb. ii. 16. What a sweet thought to the soul. All creatures are nothing in a way of procuring salvation. And this blessed vision *John* saw, had evidently this great design, in shewing the total inability of creatures to heighten the glory of CHRIST. Acts iv. 12.

Thirdly. It is evident, from the representation here made, that the opening this Book, and loosing the Seals thereof, implied the whole design of God's plan, concerning the Church; and that in the opening and declaring the decree, was connected with it the fulfilling it, and of which, in the discovery of one worthy to this deed, every thing in salvation is contained. Reader! before you proceed, pause over this view. Sweetly hath God taught herefrom in heaven, as well as on earth, the personal and peculiar fitness of CHRIST, as the only Mediator, to raise up our nature from the ruins of the fall. None but Him was able. None but him worthy. None but that Almighty God-Man, who is made higher than the heavens, could be competent to this office! Oh! how doth it exalt the Son of God to our view! Oh! how ought it to endear him to our hearts.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The exercises of *John* are sweetly recorded, for the instruction of the Church. He was called up to heaven. But after a short space he is made to weep, yea, to weep much. Thus we see, that even

visions of heaven when opened, are not immediate happiness. Sorrow is often before joy. Reader! recollect that this was but a vision. The redeemed when in reality they enter heaven, will weep no more. Rev. vii. 16, 17. But in fact, *John's* mind was thus kept in suspense, for the greater glory which was to follow. JESUS himself was in the moment near at hand, yea, Jesus was soon after to come forward to *John's* view, and take the book and open the seals in his sight, but to heighten both CHRIST's glory, and *John's* joy; the Apostle shall first be exercised with seeming difficulties. It is so for the most part in the path of the LORD's people. Their way to heaven lies through the valley of *Baca*. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*

The comfort and encouragement, given by one of the Elders to *John*, is very interesting. He not only tells him to dry up his tears, for there was one found worthy to accomplish all his wishes, but he points out his Person, and by the well known name of *Judah* or *Jehudah*, from whom CHRIST, after the flesh, sprang, the identity of his Person was defined. Gen. xlix. 10. I pray the Reader to pause here, in order to mark the special grace of God. It was with *John*, as it is often with the Church. When visions of God begin, then come exercises. And when exercises abound, God's consolations abound. All the difficulty thrown in the way of *John*, was only to heighten CHRIST's glory to the Apostle's view, and to increase the Apostle's joy and confidence in CHRIST. And what it was with *John*, so is it with all the LORD's people. When none can be found worthy in heaven, or in earth, to deliver the soul; oh! how blessed then is CHRIST.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain; having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat up on the throne.

Every thing here mentioned is blessed. CHRIST in the midst of the throne. This is gloriously descriptive of his power and GOD-HEAD. The centre of the throne can only be suited for Him, in whom all fulness dwells. He could not have been seen in the midst of the throne, had he not possessed it. And he could not have possessed it, had he not been in his divine nature and essence, *One with the FATHER over all, GOD blessed for ever!* So, that here is a most decided evidence of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. *John* saw him as a Lamb, in the midst of the throne.

Secondly. He saw him stand as a Lamb that had been slain; that is, I apprehend, bearing on his glorified body, the marks of our redemption. As if fresh blood appeared upon him. A sweet assurance this, of the perpetual and everlasting efficacy of his sacrifice. He stood as if he had been slain. Reader! never lose sight

of this. The merits of CHRIST's blood are as powerful, and will remain so for ever, as in the moment of his death. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 14.

Thirdly. By the midst of the throne must be understood, that all power is his, and that he is there to administer all government. For whether we consider this throne as a throne of grace, or a throne of justice, or a throne of glory, Jesus in the midst of it, implies that his is the office of administration to all. Oh! what a thought for all his redeemed ones to keep in view and cherish, and especially when they are told, that Jesus is there for them, and that they are commanded at all times, and upon all occasions, to come boldly to the throne of grace, *to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Heb. iv. 16.

Fourthly. CHRIST is further described in this scripture, as having seven horns and seven eyes, meaning, as seven is a perfect number, that Jesus hath a perfection of power, and a perfection of knowledge; with the one to bear up and strengthen all his redeemed against their enemies, and to destroy them; and with the other, having all knowledge, to have a clear apprehension of all their wants, and to provide for them. Reader! shall not you and I find comfort from this precious view, of the Lamb of God which *John* saw in vision? There can be no question of the efficacy of his blood, for he appeared and stood a Lamb, as it had been slain. There can be no question of his carrying on his High Priestly office for his Church; for he stood as advocates stand to plead. There can be no question of his success, in pleading his own merits and blood, for the marks of that blood were still upon him; and he was in the midst of the throne, to shew his triumphs and his own personal glory. There can be no doubt, but that he will bring all his redeemed up to himself in heaven, for he was seen in the midst of the throne, as if to say, he had taken possession of it in their name. Precious LORD JESUS! give me with the eye of faith, unceasingly to behold thee, in this most blessed view; and let my soul be warmed continually, with the conscious assurance, that I have redemption in thy blood. Then shall I centre all my confidence in the LORD, who is in the centre of the throne for his people.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 ¶ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

What a delightful view is here of CHRIST coming and taking the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne? None but CHRIST could do this? He is the only Mediator. Hence the Prophet described him, as coming alone, and of the people *there were none with him*. Isaiah lxiii. 3. And there is a sublime and beautiful account, of this engagement, and undertaking of CHRIST, by the Prophet, in which GOD the FATHER is the speaker. *And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me, for who is this that engaged his heart, to approach unto me, saith the LORD?* Jerem. xxx. 21. Hence we blessedly learn, that CHRIST, as Mediator, engaged his heart to this service, when he took the book of GOD's decrees, and undertook to perform them. And he hath performed them. And his redeemed are secured in the performance, and are accepted, sanctified, and everlastingly blessed in him!

The wonderful effect which followed, in CHRIST's taking the book is here shewn. Instantly the song of redemption broke out in heaven; and the words they sung, are handed down to the Church upon earth. It is called a new song, because redemption-work was newly finished, when CHRIST on the cross declared it so, and returned to glory; and because it is a new song, which can only be truly sung from new hearts, when renewed by the HOLY GHOST. And CHRIST to whom this song is personally addressed, is supposed here as having lately finished redemption-work, and now returned to glory.

I pray the Reader to observe some of the very sweet and leading notes of this song. *First*. That it is CHRIST's Person, as Redeemer, who is here said to be worthy of praise. And how ought all his redeemed, conscious, by regeneration, of their union with him, and redemption by him, to make him the daily object of their love, and obedience, and praise, as the Church in heaven do?

Secondly. That the song itself is *redemption*. It was for this CHRIST was slain, and the Church is redeemed to GOD by his blood. And this is so blessed a subject, that even angels, who have no concern in it themselves, yet join in it, in blessing CHRIST for it to others. See verse 13.

Thirdly. This redemption-song hath another great property of sweetness in it, namely, in that it is not only redeeming the Church from among men, but redeeming to GOD. So that, while redemption is in CHRIST, and by CHRIST, it is from GOD our FATHER the mercy also originates and returns. *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.* From GOD as the first cause, and to GOD as the final end!

Fourthly. This redemption-song hath another precious note in it, namely, in that it is personal and particular. For the redeemed in heaven, which are here represented as singing it, declare that CHRIST is worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, because he was slain, and had redeemed them to GOD by his blood, *out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.* Not every kindred, but out of every kindred. Hence personal and particular redemption.

Fifthly. Another delightful note swells the song of redemption; for JESUS hath not only redeemed them from among men, but

made them *unto our God* (said they) *kings and priests*. Oh! the blessedness and royalty of CHRIST's kingdom, where all the family are ennobled and consecrated in JESUS.

Lastly. The song ends with the assurance, *and we shall reign on the earth*. Reader! do observe the expression! The triumphs of CHRIST's kingdom in the latter-day dispensation, upon the earth, according to this song, will be greater than their spirits now have in heaven; for otherwise they would not have noted it with such joy in their song. In the prospect of it, they seem to lose sight of their present state, and pleasingly anticipate their reign with CHRIST upon earth. And they chaunt it with a firmness of delight and certainty. *And we shall reign on the earth!* Reader! what say you to this song of redemption? Hath God the HOLY GHOST, by regeneration, put this new song in *your* mouth, even thanksgiving to our God! Can you sing it *now*? If so, surely when you come to join this heavenly host, you will sing it *then*?

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 ¶ Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen, and the four *and* twenty elders fell down, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Here we have another goodly company, but different from the former, ascribing a seven-fold praise to the LAMB. These are described as angels round the throne; yea, *John* saith, every creature that was in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, all joining together in ascribing glory and praise to the LAMB. In order for the right apprehension of this hymn of adoration, let it be considered, that the elect angels, who, though not redeemed by CHRIST, and have no union with CHRIST, yet, being created by CHRIST, and kept and confirmed in their state of holiness by CHRIST, worship, and adore, and obey Him. Their multitude is here described, to intimate what a glorious body they are. And all

the creatures of GOD are said to praise CHRIST, yea, the very enemies of CHRIST shall bow their knee before Him, and be made to acknowledge his greatness and his glory. The oath of the LORD hath said it, yea, the LORD hath sworn it. *I have sworn by myself, (the LORD saith,) the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.* Isaiah xlv. 23. These things explain to us the nature of this last hymn, so differently worded from the former. I do not think it necessary to swell these pages, by enlarging on the several particulars here expressed. The harps, and golden vials, are perhaps in allusion to the Temple service, under the old Jewish dispensation. But the musical instruments of the New Testament Church on earth, and of the New Jerusalem Church in heaven, can mean nothing more than the new-strung chords of the renewed spirit in CHRIST JESUS. To these, the whole Church of GOD, both in heaven and earth, will give their hearty Amen. Yea, as one of the sweet names of CHRIST, and as an ordinance in holy worship, all, and every regenerated child of GOD will bless himself in CHRIST, the Amen. See Isa. lxxv. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

OH! thou glorious LORD of the tribe of Judah, precious JESUS, thou art He whom thy brethren shalt praise, for thou wert alone worthy to take the book, and to loose the seals thereof. Truly, Almighty LORD, but for thy undertaking the Church must have wept for ever! But, praised be GOD our FATHER, thou hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. And praised be GOD the SPIRIT for giving thy Church this precious record, and handing it down to us with such gracious explainings. All heaven was filled with odours to our JESUS's praise. And all earth shall offer their praises to the LAMB! LORD, amidst the ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands, let not my poor soul be silent, who oweth all its mercies to GOD and the LAMB! Feeble, and poor, and unworthy as it is, still, Lord, hear me when I say, Thou art worthy to receive all praise, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me to GOD by thy blood.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

With this Chapter commenceth the Opening of the Seals. Here are six of them opened in this Chapter, the various Events of which are enumerated in Prophetical Language, and with these the Chapter closeth.

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was

given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer,

Let the Reader attend to the various particulars under these different periods of events, classed under the term of *seals*; every one of which becomes interesting. It appears very plain, that the vision of *seals*, of *trumpets*, and of *vials*, hath each its distinct object in prophecy. The two preceding Chapters having introduced to the Church the divine authority of the whole in God and the LAMB; and CHRIST having come forward to open the book, and loose the seals thereof, now enters upon the glorious service. And here begins with the prophecy of the *seals*.

For the better apprehension of the subject it may be proper previously to consider, what we may suppose is meant, according to scripture language, of the term *seal*. Two or three striking significations seem to be folded up in the name. *First*. It certainly implies somewhat that is secret; and such, no doubt, are all the ways and works of God, in relation to his creatures. All the mysteries of our holy faith necessarily are secret, and, in some points, must everlastingly be so. And the opposition made to the SON of God, in the struggles of the kingdom of darkness, yea, the state of CHRIST's Church, in the *Adam*-nature of the fall, and the natural hatred, even of his own people, until recovered by grace, these are secrets indeed, which the LORD only can explain, and therefore none but CHRIST could be found worthy to open and unfold them to his people.

Secondly. There is somewhat wonderfully striking in those seals, considered with an eye to the LORD's people, as distinguished from the world. To gather into one point of view all that is said of *seals*, and *sealing*, as relating to the Church of God, would make a large volume. The sacred purposes and decrees of GOD the FATHER, are frequently expressed by this term. *His treasures are said to be sealed*. Deut. xxxii. 34. *His stars are sealed*. Job ix. 7. And Job observed, that *his transgressions were sealed up in a bag*; meaning, well-known. Job xiv. 17. In relation to CHRIST, circumcision is said to be *a seal of the righteousness of faith*; Rom. iv. 11. and regeneration is *the seal of the HOLY GHOST*. 2 Cor. v. 5. And the LORD's knowledge of his people is said to be as *a seal*, because *the foundation of God standeth sure*. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Thirdly. By *seals*, and opening them, implies so many pledges, that the things spoken of shall be assuredly accomplished. And we, in the present hour, have this additional testimony, that in the fulfilment of one, all the rest are pledged to be confirmed. Time only can bring to pass, according to the decree, what is said. Nevertheless, in the accomplishment of all that is past, we may safely calculate for all that is to come. The same LORD speaks now, that spoke to the Prophet of old: *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*. Dan. xii. 4.

So much in a general way concerning the *seals*. Let us now attend to the effect, which attended the opening of them. John saith, that when the Lamb opened one of them, namely, the *first*, he heard as it were the noise of thunder; *one of the four beasts saying, Come and see*. Now here is an invitation, and that most persuasively

introduced, to attend to the wonderful events contained in the opening of the *seals*. And what is the Church called upon for to see? Evidently, CHRIST himself, going forth, by the various methods of his grace, to gather his Church out of the heathen world. Hence, he is represented as on a *white horse*, to intimate the spotless purity of himself and his Gospel; and the *bow* shewed the weapons of his warfare, sure and certain in his victory, *conquering and to conquer*. There is nothing doubtful in this war. *As for those that would not that I should reign over them; bring them hither, and slay them before me.* Luke xix. 27.

But, what I would particularly desire the Reader to attend to in this account is, the *time*, in which this prophecy opened, and the state of the world at its opening. Let the Reader recollect what hath before been remarked in the general observations, at the opening of this book of the Revelation, that the *Roman Empire* was at this time Mistress of the World; and that that Empire was *heathen*. The Jews were now dispersed. CHRIST, therefore, goeth forth, in the purity of his Gospel, to gather together in one, *the children of God which are scattered abroad*. John xi. 52. A *white horse*, was a beautiful representation both of the purity of his Person, and of his doctrine. And the *crown*, as striking an *insignalia* of his sure victory. So spake the royal Prophet; Psm. xlv. 4, 5, 6. And the HOLY GHOST again confirmed it, in reference to CHRIST: Heb. i. 8. And the succeeding ages of the Church had the felicity to see the accomplishment of this part of the prophecy. For the Empire; which, at CHRIST's ascension, was *heathen*, in a period of about three hundred years, became *christian*; that is, *professed Christianity*; and this in the person of *Constantine* the Emperor, who first openly avowed it. So that by this time, the Gospel had run down all the idols of *Rome*.

I would pause, just to remark the slender means the LORD was pleased to adopt, for this purpose. In the few poor fishermen of *Galilee*, and their companions, the first preachers of the Gospel, we find the only instruments made use of, against all the philosophy of this known world; as if the Church should always have in view the LORD himself, on his white horse, and crown. For when is beheld such a disproportion between the instruments and the work accomplished, it is impossible but to recognize the divine hand. Here, most eminently, God chose the *foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty*. 1 Cor. i. 27. And, let not the Reader forget, while contemplating the subject as it then was accomplished, how sure a pledge it gave, that in like manner, all opposition should give way throughout the world in every age of the Church before the Gospel, in the sure accomplishment of all the remaining prophecies. CHRIST still appears to the eye of faith, on the white horse, with his crown, *conquering and to conquer*, until the *seventh trumpet* be sounded, and that glorious event follow, when *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. Rev. xi. 15.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse *that was red*; and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Here we have the immediate effect of the opening of the *second* seal. And let not the Reader overlook, who it is that opened every one of them. None but CHRIST could be found worthy. Oh! precious thought! All power is our LORD's, in heaven, and in earth. He reigns, and rules over all. By a *red* horse, seems to imply blood. And, as power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and there was given unto him a great sword; the matter seems plain enough, that where CHRIST, on his white horse, in the meekness and mildness of his Gospel-grace, is not received, the judgments of peace are taken away, and blood-shedding shall succeed. And, in the history of the Church, as recorded from the time of CHRIST's return to glory, to about the year of our LORD God 140, there were great slaughters took place in the empire. *John*, the beloved Apostle, died, it is supposed, about ten years after writing this Book of the Revelation. And if this book be dated, as is generally done, Anno 94, then it will follow, that *John* died Anno 104. Reader! pause over this seal, just to remark the plan of divine government. CHRIST on his white horse, if not received, hath his judgments on others that follow. All must bend to his sceptre. He hath sworn to it with an oath. Isaiah xlv. 23. How strong the words of the Psalmist. *Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psm. ii. 12.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

By this *third* horse, which was *black*, and the scanty measure of corn, which *John* heard proclaimed, as the standard price for a penny, meaning a man's daily allowance; (Matt. xx. 2.) is very plainly taught to us, that it implied *famine*: when *all faces gather blackness*, as the Prophet said, *and when the land was desolate.* Joel ii. 3—6. And God long before declared, that such should be the case, when punishments followed, one upon the heels of another. *When I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight, and ye shall eat and not be satisfied.* Levit. xxvi. 26. Now

let the Reader pause, and observe how suitably the LORD's judgments follow the rejection of CHRIST and his Gospel. JESUS is the bread of life. He comes on a *white horse*, to intimate peace, and plenty. Men reject him. Then comes one on a *red horse*, with a sword for war. Whether we are to consider CHRIST himself on this red horse, I will not determine, or whether his messenger. For the Prophet *Zechariah*, in his vision, saw CHRIST on a *red horse*, and behind him there were *red horses speckled*, that is, bay and white. *Zech. i. 8.* To this judgment succeeds another, namely, *famine*. And how awful doth the Prophet describe the little effect which follow all judgments, where grace is not in the heart? *I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. Amos iv. 6.* But, Reader! what a yet more awful judgment is that, when, for the wickedness of a land, the LORD withdraws his Gospel, gives the land up to a perpetual barrenness of God's truths. Such a state the same Prophet describes, if the Reader would see it: *Amos viii. 9* to the end. But let God's people rejoice under all scantiness of the bread that perisheth in using, as long as they have the bread of life broken to them by the LORD himself, from day to day. In times of persecution in this land, the old saints of God used to say, that bread and water, with CHRIST and his Gospel, was delicious fare. And this proved that sweet scripture, and marked the LORD's distinguishing grace over his people, when the LORD God said: *Behold, my servant shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed!* I beg the Reader to turn to the scripture itself, for it is a sweet one, and let him read the whole. *Isaiah lxxv. 13* to the end.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come, and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him, and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Here, at the opening by CHRIST, of the *fourth* seal, we have the end, for the present, of the ministry of the *Beasts*; and we hear no more of them until the pouring out of the *Vials*, at the *fifteenth* Chapter, verse 7. and then, but one of them. I do not presume to speak decidedly concerning them, but by their kind invitation to *John*, at the opening of each seal, *to come and see*, I am inclined to consider them, as representing ministers in the Church. We find their number *four*, in their place as before, and again towards the close of this Book of God, worshipping. *Rev. xix. 4.*

This *pale* horse, and death upon him, closeth up the judgments. Indeed, death, as it relates to the present world, is a final close to

all. But here was the awfulness of this judgment, *hell followed*. The LORD had said by his servant the Prophet, that he would bring *his four sore judgments upon Jerusalem; the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence*. Ezek. xiv. 21. But here, the tremendous addition at the opening of this *fourth seal*, in hell following death, gives the finishing stroke to misery, and sums up all in everlasting woe!

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The opening of this *fifth seal* by CHRIST, opens with it one of the most interesting subjects our minds, under the influence of grace, can possibly conceive. I shall beg the Reader's indulgence, to be somewhat particular upon it.

And *first* : the cry of those that had been slain for the testimony of JESUS, is beautifully represented, as under the Altar. Now this proves to us, that on the departure of the faithful from this world, they enter among the *spirits of just men made perfect*. They are under the Altar.

Secondly. They are not unacquainted with the circumstances here below, but take part in all that concerns the Church. Hence their cry, for judging, and avenging CHRIST's cause. What an animating thought to the Church of God upon earth ! Reader ! think of the multitude of martyrs, who are looking over the battlements of heaven, beholding the exercises of the LORD's people here below ; Surely, with the eye of faith we may behold them ! Yea, with the ear of faith hear them calling upon us, to be *faithful unto death, and God will give us also a crown of glory that fadeth not away ! Be ye followers of us, who now through faith and patience, inherit the promises*.

Thirdly. While we regard what is here said, of their cry to God, for avenging their blood ; and the assurance they here received, that all should be fully done, in due season ; let us learn, the highest lesson we can learn below, in the assurance, how much more the blood of CHRIST, yea, CHRIST in Person, having carried up his own blood before the throne, must plead for his redeemed, and the destruction of all his enemies. Oh ! how safe and sure, how eternally

safe and sure, are all the interests of the Church! How unalterably determined, is the everlasting ruin of all the enemies of our God, and his CHRIST!

When the Reader hath duly pondered these things, let him attend to the gracious answers the LORD gave to the cry of those souls, and the blessedness shewn them.

First. Their souls were clothed with white robes, yea, every one of them, had his own separate and distinct robe, as each soul hath his separate and distinct mansion. JESUS's garment of salvation, each redeemed soul must appear in. It is his justifying dress. It is his coronation, his wedding robe. By this JESUS owns his Church, in every individual instance of his people. So the LORD had said to *John*, of the few names he had in *Sardis*. And here we find it confirmed. *They shall walk with me in white, saith the LORD, for they are worthy.* Rev. iii. 4.

Secondly. The LORD assigns a reason, for suspending the judgments they called for on their murderers. There were other, their fellow servants, to have the crown of martyrdom. And, therefore, until those men, ordained of old to this condemnation, had filled in the measure of their iniquity, and the LORD's people were ripened for glory, they must rest for a little season. Oh! what subjects of endless meditation and delight, arise out of this one view of the LORD's regard to his people. Did the ungodly but know wherefore they are spared, or did the LORD's people but call to mind, in ten thousand instances, the causes of suspension, in all the numberless cases they hear of, or meet with in the world; how would the *one* tremble, and the *other* in patience possess their souls?

Thirdly. Ponder well the LORD's answer, in another point of view, for the suspension of the destruction of their enemies; in that thousands yet unborn, of the LORD's people, were to arise, to whom those enemies were to be persecutors, and whose happiness was to be increased from such evils. What a subject is here unfolded, and which no man can fill in, of the unborn, the uncalled, the unawakened, of the LORD's hidden ones, all of which are given to JESUS, and which also he must bring. Even down to our times, and so on to the end of the world, there are JESUS's lambs of his fold, which must arise and be worried by the wolves, as the LORD told the Jews. *Some of them shall ye kill and crucify, and some of them scourge in your synagogue, and persecute them from city to city.* Matt. xxiii. 34. Hence, therefore, they which are gone before must rest under the altar, until that their fellow servants and their brethren be brought home. Yea, it is on their account, that the world itself standeth!

Fourthly. Let not the Reader overlook that beautiful feature in this representation. The souls under the altar in heaven, are *fellow servants and brethren*. So the LORD himself hath here called them; and it is our mercy to know it, and to keep it in remembrance. Neither are they dearer though in heaven, to our glorious Head, than we are, though here below on earth. All alike the FATHER's gift, and the SAVIOR's purchase, and the subjects of GOD the SPIRIT's regenerating grace. Oh! how ought the consciousness of this, to endear JESUS to our hearts! Our LORD will not fully answer, the cries of his redeemed in heaven, though martyrs to his cause, until that he hath secured his redeemed upon earth, and brought them also

home to glory. Reader! think of these things, and bless the LORD for such tokens of his love.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood,

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

17 For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?

Some have thought, that what is here said under the *sixth* seal, hath respect to the final judgment at the great day of God. And to be sure, the awful things which are here related, seem, in the first view of the subject, to favor that opinion. But when it be considered, that there is another seal yet remaining to be opened, independently also of what hath not yet been brought forward, of the *Trumpets* and *Vials*, it must at once strike the mind with conviction, that however strong in allusion to the last day, the things here represented may be, it is impossible.

I do not presume upon this, or any other scripture, of doubtful signification, to speak in the least decidedly, but I venture to observe, that as it strikes me, the whole events here represented, in this strong figurative language, was only intended to point out the awful judgments which should take place, under the ministration of the *sixth* seal. According to the general calculation, as to the time of this sixth seal, there had only run out about *three hundred years*, when it was opened. And the Empire now becoming Christian, (that is, in the *profession* of it,) the persecutions which then began against the true Church, though now arising from heresies within, instead of heathenism without, became more dreadful, if possible,

than the former. It was somewhat about this period, that arose that heretic *Arius*, denying the GODHEAD of CHRIST; whose baleful influence hath shewed its malignity in every period, from that time to the present. I venture therefore to believe, that what is here said under the several similitudes of an earthquake, the sun becoming black, and the moon as blood, and stars from heaven falling and the like, are intended to set forth the awful event, in a CHRIST-despising doctrine, such as in the present day, the world professing Christianity is remarkable for. And what figures more suited to speak the monstrous baseness and ingratitude in the foul dishonor shewn to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, than, that at the view of which, the sun turns black, and the moon becomes red with blood? And the eventual consequences to the actors of this perfidious treatment of CHRIST, is as finely represented, in that their discovery when too late, of the glory of the LORD JESUS; and as set forth under all the alarms of their guilty souls, in calling to the mountains and the rocks to fall on them, to hide them, if possible, *from the wrath of the Lamb*? According to my view of this scripture, there appears a striking propriety in the whole, and nothing can be more suited to each other, than the guilt and the punishment. But having said thus much, I leave it with the Reader to make his own conclusion, under God's teaching.

REFLECTIONS.

METHINKS I would wait in silent humble adoration, while my GOD and SAVIOR opens the seals one by one, to make known to his Church the mysteries of his kingdom. And while I hear the voice of invitation, *Come and see!* oh! for the LORD that calls to give grace also to hear, that I may understand those prophecies of our God.

Precious LORD JESUS! Is it not thou that I behold, going forth on the white horse crowned with victory, *conquering, and to conquer?* And do I not hear thee say, and my soul makes her cheerful responses to the same; *As for those that will not I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me!* Yes, LORD, the red horse of blood, and the black horse of famine, and the pale horse of death, with hell in the rear, are suitable to follow in the execution of thy judgments.

I bless my GOD for unfolding to his Church, the precious view of the souls under the Altar, beseeching the LORD, to avenge their blood on their enemies. May I learn many a sweet lesson herefrom! And when at any time, I am impatient under exercises, waiting for answers to prayer, here may I look up and learn, how to explain all seeming difficulties. If JESUS deferred the answer to them, how shall I complain? I here discover, that delay is not denial. There is *a set time to favor Zion*. And learn, O my soul, a sweeter lesson still. *Abel's* blood called for vengeance. The martyrs of my GOD plead to be avenged. But JESUS's blood for mercy. Oh! what a thought, to comfort a poor sinner!

LORD! what an awful account this Chapter closeth with, of those apostates under the *sixth* seal, and every other who deny CHRIST's GODHEAD, and cause even sun, moon, and stars to blush at their foul

ingratitude. Surely their judgment is just. For to whom can they look for salvation, while they deny his power who alone can save. Think then my soul of thy safety and happiness, in having CHRIST for thy portion! Precious LORD JESUS, say to my soul, *fear not, I am thy salvation!*

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Sealing of the Servants of GOD. The Number sealed! John hath shewn Him an innumerable Multitude, gathered out of all Nations, standing before the Throne. They are described who they are, and how they came there. The Glories of the LAMB.

AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 ¶ Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

This is a most sweet and interesting Chapter. Between the close of the events of the *sixth* seal, and before the *seventh* seal is opened, the LORD was graciously pleased, to manifest his watchful care over his Church and people, by sealing them. See that blessed scripture, Isaiah xxvii. 3. A new state of things was now to arise. The heathen world, that is, the *Roman Empire*, and called the *world*; Rom. i. 8. Coloss. i. 6. was now under the *sixth* seal become Christian, that is, professing Christianity. A belief in CHRIST, was now openly avowed. The Emperor himself, professed his faith in CHRIST. But amidst this national creed, deadly heresies were now arising to afflict the Church. *Arius* had now sprung up with his awful doctrine in denying the GODHEAD of CHRIST, though professing his belief in CHRIST. And under what a variety of different shades hath his heresy, from that hour to the present appeared, in what is called the *Christian* world? Christian only in name. Reader! pause and adore the LORD for his grace, in causing his Church to be sealed at such a period, as if to say, when errors of a more than ordinary nature are springing up, then the LORD will appear for his people, and have his servants know, how secure they are, for he

hath sealed them. And take one thought more with you on the subject. God the SPIRIT hath graciously caused this record of the LORD's care over his Church to be handed down through all ages of his Church, as if to say, let this comfort the LORD's people in perilous times, they are also sealed. For as the LORD watched over them *then*, so doth he *now*. And this one record, is in the place of a thousand arguments, to teach the Church these precious truths. Let men or devils rage, at one time more than another, *nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the LORD knoweth them that are his.* 2 Tim. ii. 19. And the sealed servants of the LORD know also whose they are, and to whom they belong. *For after that ye believed, saith the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* Ephes. xiii. 14.

By the four Angels which *John* saw, I am not inclined to think any thing particularly is intended from their number. As there are four corners spoken of, and four winds, alluding to the several directions from whence the various winds blow, so it should seem probable, the four in number of Angels, only mean one for each department. But, by the other Angel so called, whom *John* saw ascending from the east, it is evident could mean none, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and though here called an Angel, or Messenger of the Covenant, as he is called, Malachi iii. 1. yet the office he is both there and here said to perform, could belong to none but God. *Him hath God the FATHER sealed.* John vi. 27. And his office as God-Man Mediator, is to seal his people. Indeed, every thing that is here said of him, implies it. His command to the four Angels prove it, being the head of all principality and power, and whom the Angels worship. Col. ii. 10. Heb. i. 6. And his having the seal of the living God no less shews it, for who should have the seal or use it, but He who alone was found worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. Rev. v. 5. He, *who is the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and the express image of his Person, and who upholds all things by the word of his power.* Heb. i. 2, 3. And what a volume of the richest blessings, are included in this view of CHRIST sealing his people? I hope the Reader will indulge me, with mentioning a few of the gracious contents.

First. The Person sealing, is the great and leading point to be regarded in this account. And this, as hath before been observed, could be no other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And there is a very blessed consideration, connected with this view of CHRIST's sealing his people. It was not to inform him, for all the names of his people are in his book of life. Luke x. 20. Isaiah iv. 3. Philip. iv. 3. Rev. xxi. 27. And his flock must *again pass under his hand.* Jerem. xxxiii. 13. And all he hath received of his FATHER he hath undertaken for. John vi. 37, 38. and John x. 28. But the sealing of his people seems to have been with a special eye to their comfort. It is, as if the LORD had said, behold the love I have for you, I hereby acknowledge you for mine. Isaiah xliii. 1—7.

Secondly. Who they are that are sealed, namely, *the servants of our God.* Such, as the LORD by electing grace, chose from all eternity; and by sovereign grace, are called in *time*. They were once, when in the *Adam*-nature, servants of sin; but by regene-

rating grace, are brought into the family of God in CHRIST. And because from all eternity they were sons, they received in the fullness of time the call of adoption by the HOLY GHOST, whereby they cry, *Abba FATHER!* Gal. iv. 6. Coloss. i. 12, 13.

Thirdly. This sealing of God, not only confirms whose they are, but their high privileges also. Given by the FATHER, betrothed and redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, they carry about with them, both the *outward* sign of their seal, and the *inward* testimonies in the effect of grace in the heart. For as seals are worn in sight, and rings on the finger, are tokens to bring to remembrance the friend or giver, so, the sealed soul makes manifest, by every suitable and becoming testimony, his love and attachment to JESUS. *I have set the LORD* (said one of old) *always before me. He is on my right hand, I shall not be moved.* Psm. xxvi. 8. And the child of God desires, that CHRIST shall have the whole affections of the heart. The LORD JESUS, may be supposed to have all these things, and much more in view, when he called to his Church and said, *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame.* Song viii. 6.

Fourthly. There is somewhat very expressive, in what is said in the place of sealing; namely, in their foreheads, that is, it shall be open and not concealed. The world shall know whose they are. And although the marking here made, was intended as preparatory to very awful times coming on, yet, God would have his people known. Their seal shall be in their foreheads. Now, as the *Arian* heresy was then opening, and beginning to shed its' baleful influence, and God would bring his redeemed out of great tribulation, (as verse the *fourteenth* sheweth,) it should seem to be very plain, that this sealing took place chiefly, if not altogether, to guard against this most awful heresy, which however little thought of by some, and considered as of small moment with others, will be found a much greater apostacy, than the religion of the beast, or the false prophet. The GODHEAD of CHRIST is the whole bottom and foundation of the faith. The man that denies this, may as well relinquish all that belongs beside to Christianity, for there is nothing left worth retaining. And tremendously awful will be the state of all such at the last day. I would say to every one, under this awful delusion; as *Tertullian* did to *Marcion*, whom he called the Murderer of Truth; Spare said he, the only hope of the whole world! But blessed be God, the hand of man might sooner snatch the sun of the natural world from its orb, than take JESUS the Sun of Righteousness from the firmament of his scripture, by denying his GODHEAD, neither would the darkness of the former be half so great as the latter.

I need not dwell long on that part of those verses, by way of explaining, which speaks of not hurting *the earth, or the sea, or the trees.* These are well known to be figurative expressions. Winds imply wars. And the earth seas, and trees mean people. And the winds or wars, are said to be held until God hath secured his people. Thus, in the days of *Noah*, before the Ark was ready to receive the Church, the fountains of the great deep were not

broken up. These waters were restrained, as those winds are said to be held. But, as soon as *Noah* and his family were housed in the Ark, the deluge followed. Gen. vii. 1—16. In like manner by *Lot*. Yea, to shew the LORD's watchful eye over his people, the LORD said to *Lot*, *haste thee and escape thither, for I cannot do any thing, till thou be come thither*. Gen. xix. 22—25. Reader! depend upon it, the same is now, as much carrying on, as then. GOD's care over his people, cannot for a moment cease. Sweetly the HOLY GHOST saith by *Peter*, *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you!* 1 Pet. v. 7. Yea, the LORD saith by *Moses*, *he loveth the people, all his saints are in his hand*. Deut. xxxiii. 3. The Church is engraven on the palms of his hands, her walls are continually before him. Isaiah xlix. 16. And it must be so. For GOD the FATHER hath given the Church to CHRIST. JESUS hath taken the Church into union with himself. He hath loved her with an everlasting love. He hath given himself for her, he hath died for her, he hath washed her in his blood, and the HOLY GHOST hath sealed her to the day of redemption. One of the Prophets felt the strength of these blessed truths so forcibly, that under the impression he cried out, *the LORD is good, a strong hold (or strength itself) in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him*. Nahum i. 7.

4 ¶ And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

5 Of the tribe of *Juda were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Reuben were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Gad were sealed twelve thousand*.

6 Of the tribe of *Aser were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Manasses were sealed twelve thousand*.

7 Of the tribe of *Simeon were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Levi were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Issachar were sealed twelve thousand*.

8 Of the tribe of *Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Joseph were sealed twelve thousand*. Of the tribe of *Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand*.

I do not presume to speak decidedly on the subject, when I say, in relation to the number *John* saw sealed, that by the hundred and

forty and four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, is not meant exactly twelve thousand of a tribe, and no more, and all the tribes the same, but the sense is, that as twelve is what is called a square number, and the square root of it, when multiplied by itself, must for ever produce the same; so the whole is put here in one determinate number, to intimate the Lord's knowing, numbering, and sealing every one. The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Prophet, had said, ages before the coming of CHRIST, *that though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return; the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.* Isaiah x. 22. And the LORD the SPIRIT, by his servant the Apostle, was graciously pleased to remind the Church of this declaration of his, and thereby to keep the expectation of its accomplishment alive in the hearts of his people. See Rom. ix. 27, 28. Here, then, once more, *John* is brought to see the servants of the LORD, in the tribes of Israel, sealed, as if to confirm the blessed assurance, that, as the HOLY GHOST was now about to close the sacred volume of scripture, the Church of God might have these things in remembrance, looking forward to the last days events in the earth, when the whole should be accomplished.

Reader! ponder well the thought, for it is blessed. We live in a day approaching to the accomplishment of all the great events prophesied concerning the Church. Sweet is that promise, *He that scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.* Jer. xxxi. 10. There shall be a day, it is said, *when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* Rom. xi. 26. And who shall say where, and in what countries is Israel scattered? Who shall say their number, or count them up by their tribes? *By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?* Jesus hath blessedly said, and that's enough to comfort the whole Church of God concerning it, that *he will gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.* Mark xiii. 27. If the Reader wishes to have his soul refreshed with a view of some of the sweet promises concerning this glorious event, he will find a multitude of them in the Bible. Isaiah xliii. 5, 6. Isa. liv. 7. Jer. xxxi. 8. Ezek. xi. 17. Micah iv. Zeph. iii. Zech. x. &c.

In going over the names of the several tribes of Israel, here mentioned, I beg the Reader to notice with particular attention, that *Judah*, though not the eldest of *Jacob's* sons, is first mentioned. I do not here again speak decidedly, but I am inclined to think that precedence was given to this tribe, because our Lord sprang out of *Judah*. Heb. vii. 14. And very blessed was the dying Patriarch's prophecy to this amount. *Judah! thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.* Gen. xlix. 8. It is blessed to eye CHRIST in every thing, and honor given for CHRIST in all things.

And I would make one observation more respecting those tribes of *Israel*. If the Reader will consult the Old Testament, concerning the twelve tribes of *Israel*, and compare it with the number here, he will find, that though here are indeed *twelve* tribes enumerated, in correspondence to the number of the sons of *Jacob*, yet one of

Jacob's sons is not mentioned, even *Dan*; whose place is supplied with *Manasse*, one of the sons of *Joseph*, though *Joseph* himself, as a tribe, is also in the number. Various have been the opinions of men concerning it, though the HOLY GHOST is silent upon it. Some have thought it was because the tribe of *Dan* apostatized, in the instance of the idols of *Jeroboam*. 1 Kings xii. 26—30. But, I confess, that this opinion doth not satisfy me. We find the *Danites*, in the days of the Judges, setting up a graven image; and at that time the sons of *Manasseh*, even *Jonathan, the son of Gershom, and his sons*, became the priests of this idol. And yet the tribe of *Manasseh* is among the sealed, though *Dan* is not. This, I think, therefore, cannot be the reason. Judges xviii. 30. *Ephraim*, also, is omitted in this sealing. And the same reason is assigned. By the Prophet *Hosea*, the LORD indeed said, *Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone*. Hosea iv. 17. But, we find, fourscore years after this, (for so much time had run out between the ministry of *Hosea*, and that of *Jeremiah*), the LORD, by the latter Prophet, said of *Ephraim*, *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD*. Jer. xxxi. 20. I cannot venture, therefore, to conclude, that those are the reasons. But, if the Reader wishes me to go further, and assign a cause. This I dare not. The HOLY GHOST is silent upon it. I presume, therefore, not to speak upon it. *Dan* is omitted. And we learn from it a solemn truth. And it is our duty to have it in remembrance. What the HOLY GHOST hath said, upon another occasion, meets us here, *If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee*. Rom. xi. 21. If the tribe of *Dan* had then none to seal, what a breaking off was here! And if on the great day of God, when the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, and a remnant shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters; and that great purpose of God is seen, he hath declared what a manifestation will then be made of the remnant, according to the election of grace? Very blessed to this point, is that most gracious scripture, *Yet, behold, saith the LORD, therein shall be left a remnant, that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters; behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way, and their doings; and ye shall be comforted, concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways, and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done, saith the LORD GOD*. Ezek. xiv. 22, 23.

When the Reader hath made his full observations on this part of the sealing of the tribes of Israel, I beg to propose another consideration to him, of a very sweet and refreshing kind, as it strikes my view on the subject, namely, how very gracious and timely it was, thus to seal the Church, before those awful days came on, which we know followed in the persecutions of the people; I mean, not only generally so to the Church at large, but specially with an eye to the LORD's people, the Jews.

In order for the better apprehension of the subject, I would have the Reader connect with it what we now know. Many hundred years have run out since that period. The children of God were then

beginning, but as it were, to be scattered, to what they have been since. The LORD's antient people, the Jews, had not been driven from their beloved *Jerusalem*, comparatively speaking, but a short space, to what was to run out, before they were to be again called home. The great power that was now arising in the *East*, under the false Prophet, was to take into the different branches of that vast empire, multitudes of the dispersed of Israel. And as that power still remains, and so many ages and generations were to expire, during *Israel's* subjugation, what a mercy was it to the Church thus to be taught, in this vision shewn *John*; that notwithstanding all outward appearances, the LORD had marked, and knoweth them that are his. Let the Reader duly observe this, and notice God's love to his Church, in the appointment. And then let him go on to another observation.

CHRIST, the angel *John* saw, coming to seal his people, was beheld by him ascending from the *East*. Surely, this ascension from the East, plainly pointed, as with a finger, that the great cause for which the Church, in the tribes of Israel, was now sealed, was in allusion to the affairs of the Church in the *East*. And, as much about this time, under the *sixth* seal, and before the *seventh* should be opened, the false prophet would arise, and extend his vast empire over the *East*; here the Jews would be scattered in abundance, and therefore the LORD's mark should be upon them. Who shall calculate the number of *Israel* to this hour, which have been, and yet remain, from the time of *John's* vision, through a period of seventeen centuries? We are not come down yet, in our progress through this book of prophecy, to the season of the Trumpets; but we may in this place observe, for the better apprehension of the whole, (which the distant age we live in to that of *John's*, gives us the advantage to form our conclusions upon) that, as we are now, in point of time, under the influence of the *sixth* trumpet, we can discover much of what was prophesied under the *sixth* seal. Who shall say, therefore, how many of his sealed ones, from those regions in the vast empire under the false prophet, the LORD hath been gathering home, from age to age, even to the present hour? When we consider that the awful delusion of *Mahometan* imposture extends its baleful influence over the vast empire, in the East, of *Indostan*, *Persia*, *Turkey*, *Morocco*, we may reasonably conclude, that this sealing, which *John* saw in a vision, was meant to comfort the Church with those views. And, Reader, what an amazing bringing back to the Church, from those regions, will it be, when the LORD shall cause the *seventh* Trumpet to be sounded, and when those voices will be heard in the Church, saying, *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever?* Rev. xi. 15.

But, though I have just glanced at these things, we must not altogether anticipate the history in bringing them forward here. They will meet us in their proper place. In the mean time, it is sufficient for the present to observe, that the LORD was pleased to shew his servant *John*, by vision, in the interval between the *sixth* and *seventh* seal, how safe and secure his redeemed of Israel are. The LORD hath sealed them, and owned them as his. And thus *John's* mind must have been very graciously relieved from the awful persecutions

he was called upon to notice, when the seventh seal came to be opened.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

If we admire, as that we cannot but admire, and at the same time bless God for the gracious manifestation made to *John*, for the Church's consolation, in the foregoing representation of God's care over his tribes of Israel, in sealing them; with what thankfulness ought we, of the Gentile Church, to bless God for the discovery made here, of the innumerable body of CHRIST's members, gathered out of all the varieties of the earth. Here is evidently the whole Church of CHRIST, beheld by *John* in a vision, even the bride, the LAMB's wife. Such, as will be seen in reality, in that day when the LORD will make up his jewels. And it should seem to have been intended by way of confirmation, through the medium of *John*, to convince the Church, by so plain and palpable a testimony, that both Jew and Gentile form but one and the same Church in CHRIST. They are no more than one. So saith CHRIST, and blessed it is to know it. *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. And this seems to have been particularly designed also for the greater joy of the Church, through *John*; because, as *John* had seen CHRIST seal Israel, and nothing had then been said, concerning the sealing of the Gentile Church; here his mind should be refreshed immediately upon, with the representation of the whole Church, both Jew and Gentile, when brought home to glory. Instead of *sealing*, which was a most gracious act, before a time of persecution, *John* shall now see the whole Church after all sorrows are over, when *palms of victory*, and *white robes*, shall shew, that their troubles are ended. And, instead of an hundred and forty and four thousand of *Israel* only, he shall behold a multitude of all Israel, Jew and Gentile, which no man could number; to shew, that CHRIST's triumphs shall bear a suitable

correspondence to the Almightiness of his Person and offices; *nations*, that is, some of all nations, *shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.*

The best service I can render the Reader, in looking together with him over this most precious scripture, will be, I conceive, to gather out some few of the more special and leading particulars of it, and one by one, offer some remarks, as may be supposed, were particularly intended for them.

And, *first.* *John* observes, that this blessed society he saw consisted of a multitude, which no man could number. Such views give us a most pleasing consideration, that although the Church of CHRIST, compared to the world of ungodly, is but as the remnant of *Jacob*, in the midst of many people, and therefore called, by CHRIST himself, *a little flock*: *Luke xii. 32.* yet, when the whole redeemed of the LORD comes to be gathered into one, they will form an immense body, and such a multitude as no man can number. *Paul*, speaking of the Church, saith: *ye are come to an innumerable company of Angels.* *Heb. xii. 22, 23.* And our LORD himself speaks of his mansions in his FATHER's house, as *being many.* *John xiv. 2.* But, it is a blessed thought, that though no man could number them, JESUS can. All his flocks must again pass under the hand of him that telleth them. *Jerem. xxxiii. 13.* All the FATHER hath given him, *shall come to him.* *John vi. 37.* JESUS hath all their names in his book of life. *Rev. xxi. 27.* And he saith, that as a good Shepherd, he calleth them all by name. *John x. 3.* Sweet thought, to the least, and weakest lamb, in CHRIST's fold! However unknown, or unnoticed by the flock, the Great Shepherd both knoweth them, calleth them by name, feedeth them, watcheth over them, and will bring them home to his fold. As it was in coming out of *Egypt*, so it will be in bringing in to heaven; not an hoof belonging to God's Israel will the LORD leave behind.

Secondly. This multitude is to be gathered out of all *nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.* And consequently, CHRIST hath a people in all places; otherwise they could not be said to be gathered out. Here opens a most blessed subject to contemplate. And, I very particularly desire the Reader to bear with me, and hear me with patience, upon this very interesting subject. I find cause to bless God, for what he hath here said of the *Gentile Church* in this place, as I no less would bless him, for what he had before said and done, in *sealing the Jewish Church*; for I confess, that I am inclined to think, that in both instances, there was a special design of the LORD in it. I beg indulgence to explain myself.

By *sealing* Israel, before their long oppressed state, under the despotism and delusion of the false prophet in the East, took place, we have seen the watchful eye of God over his Church. And by this further manifestation to *John*, concerning the whole Church, both Jew and Gentile, we no less see, how the LORD hath secured the present, and everlasting interests of all his people. But under both we are led to conclude, that both Jew and Gentile were alike to be gathered from the varieties of the earth. What a thought it is, that the seed of CHRIST should be thus dispersed over the whole world! And what a thought again follows upon the heels of the former, like wave after wave, in the sea; how the LORD's purposes are accom-

plished. *His thoughts not our thoughts, neither his ways our ways!* I cannot but admire this plan of infinite wisdom the more, because, for all the *eastern* world there is no prophecy in this whole book of the Revelation, except in this part. Surely, one might suppose, in so large a tract of the inhabited globe, some respect would be had, in a book of this kind, to those who peopled the *East*; and especially, as it was in the East that all the glorious transactions, of man's recovery from the fall, by CHRIST, was accomplished. But without an eye to what is here said, as referring to them, we have none. From the subsequent parts of those prophecies, to the end of the ruin of Antichrist, every thing that is said, refers to the *Western* world. Hence, therefore, this becomes a precious testimony to the recovery; in after days, of the LORD's appearing for his people. This view was evidently designed to shew the Church, that GOD hath sealed Israel; and that, from hence also, his Gentile Church should arise; and both be fully known to be the LORD's, when the purposes of GOD were accomplished.

I would beg to add one word more, upon this gathering of CHRIST's Church from the varieties of the earth; namely, how blessedly it teacheth us of the safety of GOD's children, wheresoever they are. JESUS hath marked his sheep. And he will assuredly bring them all home to his fold. Let no child of GOD, therefore, ever despond, from any situation, or exercise of life. *As the day is, the strength shall be.* Thousands now in glory, were once, when upon earth, encompassed, as we are, with difficulties, and exercised with temptations. They who have entered into rest, have triumphed over all. If the poor, tried, tempted, and exercised child of GOD, here upon earth, could see the multitude now before the throne, and could hear their account of the LORD's grace, concerning them, while here below; how would it animate, and encourage his mind? He would learn, that what he now feels, they once felt; what he encounters, they once endured. These things would help him, through grace, to go on. And, being encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, he would lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset him, and run with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto JESUS, *the Author, and Finisher of his salvation!* Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Thirdly. There is one feature more of this multitude *John* saw, which is strikingly descriptive. They are said to have been *standing before the throne, and before the Lamb!* Here we plainly discover, that the throne of GOD is one, and that JESUS is in the midst of the throne. And we no less discover, from what is said of the Church standing before the throne, that this is both the everlasting safety, and the everlasting happiness of the redeemed. It is our distance from this throne of GOD, which is the sad cause of all our misery. We live below our privileges. We have too little actings of faith upon the Person of CHRIST JESUS. *Perfect love casteth out fear.* If we love CHRIST because he first loved us, we shall soon apprehend the blessedness of always living to him, and living upon him. *In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore!*

Fourthly. They are said to *be clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.* Intimating that they had overcome by the blood of

the Lamb, and were therefore crowned with the emblems of victory. There is somewhat very interesting in this account. JESUS hath made all his redeemed kings and priests, to GOD, and the FATHER; therefore, as such, they stand before him, both in their royal, and priestly garments. But the sweetest view is, that these robes of white, implied both their sanctity in CHRIST, and their everlasting freedom from all sin. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of such a state of holiness and sanctification, and that for ever in CHRIST?

Fifthly. Their hymn of praise is beautiful. *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* Let the Reader from hence observe, how the Church gives her acknowledgments unitedly to all the Persons of the GODHEAD, as being the joint Authors of all her mercies in redemption. And, when it be considered, that all the Persons of the GODHEAD alike concurred in that vast design, the song of tribute becomes sweet, and suitable, in being addressed to the HOLY THREE IN ONE. GOD the FATHER set forth CHRIST as a propitiation through faith in his blood. GOD the SON gave himself an offering, and a sacrifice to GOD, for a sweet swelling savor. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, through whom that offering was made, is the great cause of regeneration, in making the redeemed the happy partakers, by grace, of those unspeakable mercies. Hence the song of salvation to GOD, that is, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, as GOD; and the LAMB, that is, the GOD-Man Mediator, CHRIST JESUS.

Sixthly, Though the Angels are said to fall before the throne on their faces, and to have worshipped GOD, saying *Amen*; yet they sung not of their salvation; for having, through GOD's grace, kept their first estate, they needed not salvation. But only as participating in the joy of the Church of GOD, and rejoicing in the glories of the LORD, they enter with an holy ardor of affection, into all that belongs to the Church's welfare, and therefore, put their hearty *Amen* to the heavenly hymn. And the sevenfold praise that follows, is descriptive both of their views of GOD's glory, and their happiness in it. *Blessings* say they, for GOD is blessed in himself, and blessed in his Church and people; yea, is their blessedness, and the fountain of all blessedness. And *Glory*, because GOD is the glory of his people. His glory is in himself, and of himself; and his glory is great, in the salvation by CHRIST. Psm. xxi. 5. *Wisdom*, is another of his distinguishing attributes, and most eminently displayed in the salvation by CHRIST. For CHRIST himself is both *the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD to salvation.* 1 Cor. i. 24. *Thanksgiving*: most suitably is this added, for if heaven, in the hierarchies of the place, could be supposed possible to be silent in the contemplation of GOD's love to the Church, in all that relates to it, the very stones of the earth might be supposed to cry out. *Honor* is also brought into the vast account. For as GOD, he is to be honored; and as GOD in CHRIST, to be everlastingly beheld as the sole source of all honor; and the LORD will take to himself honor, in the destruction of all the foes of our salvation. *Power* is eminently displayed in salvation, since nothing but the wisdom of GOD could have contrived it, and nothing but the power of GOD accomplished it. And *Might*, to bear up the whole government, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. Well might the heavenly host, there-

fore, catch fire at the Church's song, and join in, with all their powers, to swell the loud Chorus of praises to God and the Lamb. Reader! shall you and I join our feeble notes to the same? Yes! if so be we know that we have redemption through CHRIST's blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

This is as beautiful and interesting a part as any, of the whole vision. We may suppose, that the mind of *John* was wrapt up in the most profound meditation, as he looked on, and heard, and stood, like one amazed, at what he saw. One of the Elders, therefore, interpreting by *John's* looks, that he longed to enter into a perfect apprehension of the whole, put the question to him, which *John* perhaps would himself, had he presumed, have ventured to ask: *What are these things which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* And the Elder, answering his own question, for *John* and the Church's information, is most gracious. And is, if I mistake not, in direct reference to the Church of God in the *East*, particularly at the time now coming on. And, though I do not presume to suppose, yea, I think the contrary, but that the Church in all ages may be referred to; yet, as this vision was given in a very particular manner, for the comfort of the Church *then*, when the *seventh seal* should open, I do conceive,* that *those* here mentioned, as coming out of great tribulation, were those gathered more especially from the *Eastern* part of the world, from among the dominions under *Mahometan* delusion, and had a primary respect to them.

And, I will venture to go further, under an humble hope, that I do not err in the relation, and say, that now in the day in which

I am writing these observations, even in the day and year of our Lord God April 1, 1816, I do well remember the return of a godly man from the *Turkish* dominions, during the late war, who had formerly been a member of the Church of God to which I belong, and having been called into *Egypt*, there found other godly persons, sent upon a similar occasion of war, with himself; and who, having formed meetings together for sacred worship, had the pleasure to find some from among the inhabitants of that city, who came and joined their services. A plain proof, that God's people are scattered; and that Jesus hath his people, whom he is calling from the *East* as well as the *West*, and the *North*, and the *South*. And, oh! what a multitude will arise, from all those different corners of the earth, at the last day, when JESUS shall send his angels to call them home! Though they are now separated by distant seas and climes, though diversified by customs and manners; yet CHRIST, the desire of his people in all nations, hath in all nations a people that serve him: and of all these it will be found, that as the FATHER hath given them to his Son, so all shall come to him; and nothing shall separate the members from the glorious Head of his body the Church, *who filleth all in all*.

I must not trespass too largely, but otherwise the subject is as extensive as it is great, and as interesting as it is beautiful. The Elder that put the question to *John*, answered it himself. He gives an account of their persons, their former state, their present felicity, with the source of all their happiness in CHRIST, and the everlasting home of blessedness, to which they are brought, in the service of God and the Lamb, for ever. If the Reader will indulge me with a few outlines, I hope the Lord may make them profitable.

First. They are said to have come out of great tribulation. Though it may be safely said, that the Church of CHRIST, in all ages, more or less, come out of great tribulation; for CHRIST himself hath made it a mark of Sonship, that in the world his disciples shall have tribulation, while in him they have peace; John xvi. 33. yet those times which followed the sealing, between the *sixth* and *seventh* seals, were eminently marked with persecutions. The history of the Church, which relates to us the dreadful ravages made by the sword of the false prophet and his followers at that time, most plainly prove it. And indeed, what was the sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand intended for, but as the Lord's token of love to his Church, before the coming on of those persecutions? Reader! mark then, this first feature in the Lord's people. *They have come out of great tribulation.* Every child of God knows somewhat of this, if not from the open persecution of the world, yet from *the plague of his own heart*. It is blessed to know the tribulation from this quarter, in order to endear CHRIST. Till we know somewhat of our own wretchedness, we think lightly of his righteousness.

Secondly. They are said to have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Reader! I pray you, mark well what is here said. They come out of great tribulation. But that was no cause of their acceptance before God. They had white robes, and palms in their hands. But the former were not made white by their washing, nor the latter put into their hands for their

victory. No washing of their's, no sacrifice, no blood of bulls, or of goats; no merits, no works of their's, which they had done; not an atom of their's contributed to it; but it was the blood of the Lamb, the blood of JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S dear SON, in which their robes were washed; and *therefore*, that is, for that very cause, and that alone, they were before the throne of God, and served him in his temple day and night.

And under this particular, I beseech the Reader to remark yet further, that it is their *robes* which they are said to have washed. Not their sins only, but their robes, that is, their very best things. For a man's robes are his best things. And what may we suppose is implied in their best things, but their best prayers, their best deeds, their most holy services, their LORD'S day robes, their ordinance robes, their sacramental robes, their holy conversation robes. All need washing. All must be washed and made white, in the blood of the Lamb, or all become offensive before GOD. Nothing but the blood of the Lamb, can make holy before GOD, neither any but the Person and righteousness of the LORD JESUS justify in GOD'S sight. It is in Him and Him only, the Church of GOD find access here in grace or hereafter in glory. He hath made us *accepted in the Beloved*. Ephes. i. 6.

Thirdly. Let our next view of this sweet subject be, to contemplate the blessed consequences which follow. Having looked at them in their Persons, *being washed, being sanctified, being justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD*; let us hear the Elders account to *John* of the blessedness of their *station*. 1 Cor. vi. 11. *They are before the throne of GOD.* They have the immediate enjoyment of GOD and the LAMB. *Here* it is in grace. *Above* it is in glory. *Here*, they enjoy that presence by faith. *There*, in sight. *Here*, in part. *There*, in a fulness of joy at GOD'S right hand for evermore.

Moreover, they are described in their *service* of GOD before his throne *night and day*. We know not what the blessedness of such services consist in. We must be endowed with the faculties of the redeemed in glory, to speak of their employments. But we can, in some measure, conceive, what glory must continually pour in upon the soul, when no fleshly corruptions, any longer arise to interrupt spiritual pleasure. We can, and do now at times, for a short moment, when grace is in lively exercise, feel ourselves as in the suburbs of heaven, in contemplating GOD and the LAMB. Sweet and precious, though rare and short, those holy seasons are. But what must it be, when the disembodied spirit of a redeemed regenerated child of GOD, shall join the spirits of just men made perfect, and is fully come not by faith, but by sight, to JESUS the *Mediator of the New Covenant, and to GOD the judge of all*?

Fourthly. The Elder added another information, by way of heightening to *John's* view the unspeakable blessedness of the redeemed; namely, that *He that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them*. GOD'S presence among his people, is the superlative degree of all happiness and glory. Even here on earth, it is the sweetener of all blessings. Where JESUS is there is blessedness. No blessing void of him can be called a blessing. Hence, for the want of CHRIST it is, that so many aching hearts are in fine houses, while

on the contrary, where JESUS is, however poor and humble, the LORD brings all blessedness with him. And what then must it be in heaven, where the immediate presence of God and the LAMB, forms the very heaven to the soul? When *John* heard a great voice out of heaven, speaking of peculiar blessedness to the Church, it was to say, behold! *the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!* Rev. xxi. 3.

Fifthly. The blessedness of their state is further described, in their being for ever exempt from *hunger and thirst*, and a complete freedom from *sickness*, or the pressure of the *sun's heat*. They are brought into that happy climate, where none of the inhabitants shall any longer say *I am sick*, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Isaiah xxxiii. 24. It is blessed here upon earth, to have tasted the heavenly manna, even CHRIST's body the bread of life, spiritual hunger is then satisfied with CHRIST. And when the LORD JESUS gives of the water of life freely, this becomes in the spirit, a well of water springing up to everlasting life. The child of God which daily feeds upon JESUS, will hunger no more after the empty, unsatisfying husks of this world. But in heaven, what unspeakable felicity must it be, to have CHRIST for our portion, and to live upon him for ever!

Sixthly. There is somewhat peculiarly sweet and endearing in this whole account, in calling the LORD JESUS the LAMB. There can be no doubt, but that the personal glory of the LORD JESUS, is intended by it. The HOLY GHOST delights in holding up to the Church the Person of her LORD. The inherent holiness of CHRIST, and the personal purity of CHRIST, in that pure portion of our nature, taken into union with the GODHEAD; underived as it was from all created power, possesseth in itself an holiness infinitely beyond the holiness of Angels. For though the Angels which are *Elect* Angels, are kept from sinning, yet this is by election. Their nature, without that electing and preserving grace, being in itself necessarily changeable, as all created excellence must be, would be necessarily subject to fall. And that they do not fall, is wholly to be ascribed to election. For those Angels which were not Elect, have fallen. And hence it is said, *God putteth no trust in his servants, and even his Angels he chargeth with folly*; that is, with a weakness capable of sinning. Job iv. 18. But CHRIST in that holy portion of human nature, he took into union with himself, is said to be *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*; that is, higher than Angels, being the uncreated WORD. Heb. vii. 26. John i. 1.

It is on this account, if I do not greatly mistake, that the HOLY GHOST so often dwells in this Book on this expression, when speaking of CHRIST in calling him *the Lamb*. And there are numberless beauties in the name, as it concerns the LORD's Church and People. To mention only a few. *First.* It hath a sweet and sacred allusion to God the FATHER's decree, when CHRIST in our nature, was set up from everlasting. Hence he is called in this Book, *the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world*. Rev. xiii. 8. And hence also in reference to the same, the names of his people are said to be written, in the LAMB's book of life. Rev. xxi. 27.

Secondly. Through all the old Testament scripture, when the HOLY GHOST speaks of the LORD JESUS, under the meekness and gentleness of his character, it is as *the Lamb*. Hence by the Prophet, he is said to have been led *as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*. Isaiah liii. 7. And no less in the New Testament dispensation, God the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of his servant *John the Baptist*, calls upon the Church to behold him, under this endearedness of character. *For looking upon JESUS as he passed, he said, Behold the LAMB of GOD! which taketh away the sins of the world*. John i. 29—36.

Thirdly. God the HOLY GHOST never loseth sight of the same, by way of holding up to the Church's view, the personal holiness of the LORD, for when JESUS returned to his exalted state, still it is the LAMB. He, who was, and is the LAMB, *slain before the foundation of the world*; was, and is the LAMB *as had been slain*, which John saw, *in the midst of the throne*. Rev. v. 6. And now again in this vision, *as in the midst of the throne, feeding the Church, leading them to living fountains of waters, and wiping away all tears from their eyes*.

Reader! do not too hastily pass away from those views. The subject is too precious, too blessed to be so treated. Methinks I should like to dwell upon it for ever. LORD the SPIRIT! I would say, give me grace to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. Let my soul gaze upon him by faith, and feed on him in spirit, as my passover sacrificed for my sins. That while JESUS feeds my soul, my soul may feast upon his blood and righteousness, and as JESUS hath said, *he that eateth me, shall live by me*. John vi. 57.

One view of CHRIST, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, is so blessed, so gracious, and so delightful, for the faithful to meditate upon, that I would very earnestly, and very affectionately recommend it to every true follower of the LORD, as an effectual antidote against the poisonous breath of those men, who think lightly of our LORD, in this present CHRIST-despising generation. I mean, in that his being in the midst of the throne, must imply his GODHEAD. What can CHRIST be in the midst of the throne, and yet not God? Is there a hardened mind upon earth, so desperately bent to allow the one, and yet deny the other. Oh! how will such men turn into everlasting paleness, and an horrible dread overwhelm them, when they shall see our JESUS in the midst of the throne, where he now is, and the heavens passing away before his presence with a great noise, and the earth and all that is in it, burnt up.

Oh! the blessedness to God's people. Your God, your JESUS, is in the midst of the throne. And to you it is a throne of grace, where you are sure *to obtain mercy and grace, to help in all time of need*. It is to you a throne of justice also, where the LAMB is in the midst. For he hath satisfied justice, answered all the demands of the law, silenced all the accusations of Satan against his people, and reigns and rules in his throne of righteousness, to see all the merits of his blood, compleatly answered in blessings to his Church and people. And to you it is a throne of glory, for *the LORD that gives grace, will give glory*; and it is CHRIST's own glory which is concerned, to see, *that the travail of his soul shall be satisfied, for in bringing many sons unto glory, it behoved JESUS, as the Captain of*

our salvation, to be *made perfect through suffering*. Reader! shall you and I go to this throne, now JESUS is in the midst of it? Every way, and in every direction, it is open to poor sinners, behind and before, for CHRIST the Lamb slain is in the midst of the throne.

And how he feeds his people, here in grace, and there in glory; surely, every regenerated child of God cannot but know. Himself is the whole of our food. By faith, at his house, at his table, in ordinances and means of grace, all spiritual partakers truly eat of his flesh, and drink of his blood. And they find, by soul experience, what the LORD hath said, that *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed*. John vi. 55. And wherefore should it be questioned? If animal life is supported day by day, from the sustenance received in the bread which perisheth with using, shall it be thought incredible, that spiritual life is kept up and maintained, in constant supplies of grace and strength, from the bread of life which is JESUS himself, in the continued communications the LORD makes of himself to his people. Precious LAMB of GOD, that art in the midst of the throne! do thou, while giving out glory to thy redeemed above, feed with grace thy Church below. For surely, LORD, they are equally dear to thee, by every tie which can make them so, by thy FATHER's gift, thine own purchase, the conquest of thy SPIRIT over them in regeneration, and their surrender of themselves to thee, as thine, since thou hast made them *willing in the day of thy power!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while we look with holy meditation at this vision which *John* saw, and mark the four Angels holding as they were commanded, the four winds of the earth, from going forth to destruction, until the LORD had done his gracious purpose towards his servants; let us behold our Almighty JESUS ascending from the East, to mark his own against the day of tribulation! And while we see him so gracious to his *Israel*, and while we see him so gracious to his Gentile Church also, to which you and I belong, oh! for grace, to stand impressed with this most certain assurance that He is the same watchful, loving, and all lovely LORD now, as he was then. He is, He must be JESUS CHRIST; *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. Oh! then, depend upon it, that he hath sealed, he doth seal, and he will seal, every individual one of his redeemed.

And, Reader! let you and I behold our JESUS, (if so be, by regeneration you can call him your's,) encircled with his blood bought sons and daughters, now on his throne. Hath JESUS washed their robes, and will he not wash ours? Hath he made them white in his blood, and shall ours remain uncleansed? Hath he loved his Church only in heaven, and doth he not regard his Church upon earth? Did JESUS shew so much attention to his beloved at the time here shewn, and would not suffer the winds or wars to come on, until that he had sealed his redeemed, and will he behold our exercises, our difficulties and tribulations, and look on unmoved? Oh! no, thou dear REDEEMER! thou art still the LAMB, and still in the midst of the

throne. All power is thine, in heaven, and in earth. And such is thy love to thy poor ones below, that thou art watching over them night and day, lest any hurt them, and whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of thine eye! Oh! how sure, how safe, how blessed are all thine, both in earth and heaven.

Reader! let us seek grace, to eye CHRIST unceasingly, as in the midst of the throne. He hath all divine attributes, all divine blessings, all suited grace, all suited mercy. To Him may all his people come. In Him they find all suited fulness. From Him they receive the every needed grace. And to Him offer all praise and glory. LORD! hasten the hour, when thy whole Church shall be round thy throne, and thou shalt have wiped all tears from off all eyes. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

We have here, the Opening of the seventh Seal. To this succeeds the seven Angels coming forward with their seven Trumpets. An Angel is seen at the Altar of Incense. Four of the Angels in succession sound their Trumpets. Great Plagues follow.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour,

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets.

I pause at the very entrance on this Chapter, to observe, that the silence which is said to have been in heaven, by the space of half an hour, at the opening of the *seventh seal*, is not to be supposed, (indeed it cannot be supposed,) as if there was any pause in the presence of God and the LAMB in heaven. This would not correspond with all the other accounts in scripture, which are given of that blessed place. We are told that the glorious multitude, cease not night nor day, praising God and the LAMB. Rev. iv. 8. But it is spoken rather of the Church, which is sometimes, and not unfrequently called heaven, and the heavenly *Jerusalem* coming down from heaven. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. xxi. 2. And the silence of half an hour, seems only to have been a short prelude while the Angels were preparing to sound their trumpets, and the Angel at the altar offered incense.

The period of the history of the Church, which appears to correspond to this vision, according to the best calculations, seems to have been towards the close of the reign of *Constantine*. The Empire was become Christian in *profession*, and, as such, might be said to have peace from Paganism, and this is perhaps represented by silence for half an hour. But this was only a calm, before a tremendous storm. For, as soon as the Angels began to sound their trumpets, the awful persecutions, which arose from intestine wars,

and springing out of damnable errors in doctrine, brought on greater evils, than all the opposition from heathens.

3 ¶ And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

There can be no question who this other Angel was, that came and stood at the Altar with his golden Censer. It could be none but CHRIST. The office he here performed of the High Priest, belonged only to CHRIST. He, and he alone it was, whom JEHOVAH had sworn into this office. Psm. cx. 4. And as this vision was subsequent to the LORD JESUS CHRIST having performed all his offices of Redeemer upon earth, and was now returned to heaven, there to priest it also, in the office of an unchanging priesthood; nothing could be more refreshing to the mind of the beloved Apostle than to have this view of his LORD, before the sounding of the trumpets. And as it must have been refreshing to the mind of *John then*, so ought it to be, and, no doubt, as was designed, it hath been in all ages, and is *now*, to have so precious a representation of JESUS, as in this place is given of him, in the carrying on that glorious character. Heb. vii. 21 to the end. I will beg the attention of the Reader to it, for one moment.

And, *first*. It is very blessed to have such a view of CHRIST in the midst of judgments. Let the Reader remember that this was shewn *John* at the first opening of the *seventh seal*. The *seventh seal* became the prelude of the most distressing events on the earth, which began with the sounding of the *first trumpet*, and hath more or less ever since, continued through the long period, of now nearly *fourteen* centuries, and the last woe trumpet is not yet sounded. Let the Reader first ponder these things, and then consider the grace of the LORD JESUS to his servant *John*, at such a time, and to his Church at all times through him.

Secondly. Let the Reader keep in remembrance the glories of CHRIST's Person, and the blessedness of this office of High Priest, which he was here exercising. The Gospel taught the Church, that when CHRIST had made his soul an offering for sin, he should return to his FATHER, and there carry on his everlasting priesthood. And having spent one life upon earth, in dying for his people, he should spend another in heaven, in seeing the merits of his sufferings and

death, recompensed in their salvation. And, that in the execution of this purpose, he should *continue a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec*. Here then we see the blessed truth confirmed. Behold JESUS at the Altar with the golden censer of his own merits, and with the much incense of his own blood, perfuming heaven with the fragrancy! Oh! what a sight for every regenerated child of God, everlastingly to keep in view and never to lose sight of! Well may every truly regenerated believer say, how can I fail of being accepted by GOD and my FATHER when coming to him in GOD's own way, and in GOD's own appointment, under the influence and grace of the HOLY GHOST, and in the name, and blood, and incense, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *Behold! O God, our shield! and look upon the face of thine Anointed.* Psm. lxxxiv. 9.

Thirdly. This view of CHRIST at the Altar of Incense, becomes richly blessed to a poor sinner, when he is enabled by faith to connect with it, the pleasure of GOD the FATHER, in the whole transaction. While on earth, three times from heaven GOD proclaimed his love for him, and his most perfect approbation in him. And, in proof, GOD raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, gave him, as Mediator Head of the Church, power over all things in heaven and in earth, telling him, that he must reign till he had put all his enemies under his footstool, and committing to him the final judgment of all things, both quick and dead; because he is the SON of man. Oh! what a relief to all heart-straitenings in prayer, when thus a poor sinner, brought acquainted by grace with the plague of his own heart, thus comes to the throne of grace? What will signify his want of enlargement in himself, when he finds his soul through GOD the SPIRIT, so widened to take in the love of GOD the FATHER, in such a precious gift of his dear SON, and such views of GOD the SON's glory, grace, fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, to carry on the purposes of his love towards poor sinners.

Fourthly. And what a finishing view to crown the whole, doth such a manifestation of CHRIST our High Priest, at the Altar of Incense bring with it, when the child of GOD, through the HOLY GHOST's testimony of JESUS, and in JESUS, discovers the heart of GOD the FATHER on CHRIST's account, receiving, accepting, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and blessing the whole Church, and every individual of the Church, with his everlasting love, giving them all grace here, and glory hereafter. Reader! have you duly considered these things, and marked their blessedness? It is in CHRIST the SON of his love, GOD beholds his people, having *chosen them in him before the foundation of the world*; and now in the time-state of the Church, having *set CHRIST forth a propitiation through faith in his blood*. Rom. iii. 24, 25. It is in CHRIST their persons and their prayers are accepted. JESUS upon the golden Censer of his own merits and blood, presents both and perfumes both. And as this scripture saith, *the smoke of the incense, come up with the prayers of the saints, ascending up before GOD out of his Almighty hand.* JESUS it is which opens to fellowship with GOD, for we can have no fellowship with GOD without him. *Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS.* He it was, who first opened the way

by his blood, and now ever liveth to keep it open by his intercession. Heb. x. 19—22. And, as here, in and through CHRIST, we have access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER, so hereafter, all our drawings nigh, will be in and through him. *In hope*, saith one of the Apostles, *of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* And addeth another, *the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS!* Titus i. 2. 1 Pet. v. 10. Oh! the blessedness of being in CHRIST JESUS.

6 ¶ And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

It will neither be improper nor unprofitable I hope, under the LORD's teaching, if, before we enter upon the several dispensations which seem to be pointed out, under the several *trumpets*, we do by these as we did by the *seals*; first, take a general view of them, before we enter into the particulars of them. We find, that as on opening of the *fifth seal*, cries went up from under the Altar, from the souls of those, whose blood had been shed by persecution; see Chap. vi. 9, 10. So here, before sounding of the first trumpet, JESUS takes up their cause, and now begins to answer their prayers in the judgments, which, with the sounding of the first trumpet, begins to be poured upon the earth.

Concerning the dispensation of the trumpets, there can be no question, but that their very sound is an alarm. Hence, the Angel thrice proclaims, *woe to the inhabitants of the earth*, after four of the trumpets had been sounded, by reason of the greater sorrow that was to follow in the earth, under the sounding of the other *three*. And, indeed, it is evident that the ministry of the *seals*, which referred to the time when the Empire was heathen, had nothing so awful in it, as the ministry of the *trumpets*. Opposition from heathenism and idolatry, however in appearance it may seem more directly injurious to the truth than any other, is not in fact so much as what comes from false views of the truth, and the opposition made from those quarters. The man that confesseth CHRIST, but in that confession denies his GODHEAD, is a greater enemy in reality to CHRIST, than he that denies his being, and his religion altogether. I have found more bitter hatred from *Pharisees*, than from all the ungodly and careless, put them altogether. And very sure I am, that all the open enemies to the truth of the Gospel, in those who deny all revelation, are not to be dreaded for persecution, as much as those are, who on the one hand, reduce the Christian doctrine to a mere system of morality, and while professing themselves to be Christians, deny CHRIST'S GODHEAD; or on the other, those who though acknowledging his GODHEAD, and in part his atonement, yet make CHRIST only a procuring cause, and insist upon man's own attainments and improvements, as being a part SAVIOR.

The trumpet dispensation, through the whole of that department, intimated a season of greater persecution to the true Church of CHRIST, though the empire became Christian under the countenance of the Emperors, than while it remained under the darkness of idolatry. Hence the trumpets, from the sounding of the first to the last, are gradually opening the steps, by which the persecutions

came forward to the overthrow of the empire. God had appointed in the depths of the wisdom of his providence, that those two powers, the *Mahometan* imposture in the *East*, called the *false prophet*; and the folly and iniquity of Popery in the *West*, called the *Beast*; should both come forward much about the same time, and afflict the people of God. Hence, about this period it was, that upon the opening of the *seventh seal*, we find the spreading of *Mahomet's* imposture covering the *East*. *Arabia*, *Egypt*, and *Assyria*, soon were detached from the empire of *Rome*; and the Impostor *Mahomet* set up his standard in all that vast empire. On the other hand, in the *Western* world, the trumpery of Popery became soon established; and the great enemy of souls, turning Christian, and taking advantage from the errors of *Arian* heresy, soon proselyted the multitudes to the doctrine, which complimented man's goodness, at the expence of God's truth; and both these soon divided the eastern from the western world, and which, more or less, (for their iniquity is not full,) have continued to the present hour, and must continue, according to this blessed book of prophecy, until the time here predicted, for the accomplishment of both is fulfilled. So much I thought it necessary to observe, on the ministry of the trumpets, in general. We will now go on, under the LORD's permission, and under an humble hope of the LORD's teaching, to the consideration of the sounding of each trumpet; beginning with the first, and following them regularly one after another, according to the order in which they are placed.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The first trumpet sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. I would beg, once for all, to observe, that these are all figurative expressions. The earth, means the place of action, the empire where CHRIST'S Church is. The grass and trees therein are the people. So speaks the Prophet. *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, surely the people is grass.* Isaiah xl. 7. Hence, by hail and fire mingled with blood, falling on the earth, or rather people, like the plagues of Egypt, Exod. ix. 23—25. is implied, as then, God's judgments.

But the great point is to discover what those judgments were? Various have been the opinions of Commentators. Some supposing that the empire is intended, which, at this time, was divided into great parties. But I confess, that I am inclined to think, that the empire was no more concerned in these judgments, than as it concerned the Church. For, however humiliating it may be to the pride of men, it is *Zion*, and *Zion* only, that is at the bottom of all God's designs, in the earth. The putting down one empire, or the setting up of another, is only to bring about the LORD's purposes, concerning his Church and people. When this grand object is to be accomplished, the LORD makes what instrument he pleaseth, subservient to the work. An emperor, or a beggar, in raising up, or throwing down, when the Church of CHRIST needs it, is the same.

One thing is certain, that under the æra of the sounding of the *first* trumpet, the heresy of *Arius* received a deadly blow. The shower of *hail* and *fire* mingled with *blood*, might well be said to represent the check which this awful heresy (of the denial of the threefold Persons in the GODHEAD, and the personal glory of CHRIST,) then received. And, well might such a storm be sent from the LORD. For the earth, on which the storm is said to have fallen, meaning the *professing* Church, was full of this awful heresy. A few only of God's hidden ones, comparatively speaking, being preserved from the taint of it. And there is somewhat very descriptive of the different parts of this storm, if we consider it in this point of view. For *hail* injures the vines and trees, and especially young plants, in their early budding. And heresies coming down upon a Church, cannot but induce great barrenness among it. *Fire* intimates the contention which is in all *professing* Churches, where a full, and finished salvation is not uniformly maintained. And *blood*, mingled with the *fire*, hath been known to follow the hot, and violent animosities, among men, who hold not *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Reader! do not dismiss your view of the dispensations under the *first* trumpet, until that you have gathered some sweet and precious instruction from it. It must have been a very awful time, when the *Arian* heresy very generally prevailed. As in nature, so in grace, hailstorms, and fire, and blood, are solemn things. What a mercy it was then, that God had a seed to serve him? Depend upon it, the same is now. Never, perhaps, a time more awful, than the present. Men mingle up in societies, and smother their views of things; under the specious pretence, that if we preserve brotherly love towards each other, our views of CHRIST, and his great salvation, we may keep to ourselves. Hence that indifferency to divine things, and that zeal about trifles! Hence that smothering our real sentiments, in order to stand well with others. And men fancy they are doing God service, in joining the greatest enemies of CHRIST, who deny his GODHEAD, in order to promote, as they call it, the spread of the Gospel through the earth. LORD! preserve me from such delusions!

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

As the *earth* represents the people, so the *sea* can mean no other. It is the scene of action, where these great things were to be transacted. Hence the great whore, hereafter spoken of, is said to *sit upon many waters*. Rev. xvii. 1. And so again, that we may not mistake, the angel which gave *John* his intimation, said to him, *the waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*. Rev. xvii. 15. So then, what is said under this *second* trumpet, is like the former, it refers to persons. And the

casting of a great burning mountain into the sea, and the third part of the creatures in the sea dying, and the destruction of the ships, can have no reference whatever but to persons, on whom the LORD's judgments alight, for their persecution of the Church. Some have thought, and perhaps rightly thought, that as the former punishment, under the *first* trumpet, had reference to the *Arian* heresy, in denying the LORD that bought them; so this of a burning mountain cast into the sea, might have respect to what hath ever accompanied the denial of the GODHEAD of CHRIST, I mean the denial of the Person, GODHEAD, and ministry of the HOLY GHOST. Here also, as in the former judgment, we read of blood. And the history of those times were very bloody. We read of the LORD's people hiding themselves in corners to avoid persecution. But when God hides his people, he manifests himself. And, it is very blessed, often now, to remark, what gracious and wonderful interpositions, are sometimes shewn, in the salvation of his chosen! That sweet scripture is fulfilled. *The LORD knoweth, (though they know not,) how to deliver the godly out of temptation; while he will reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished.* 2 Pet. ii. 9.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

Some have thought, that the false prophet is here meant; but if we attend to the features of character given, we shall not be inclined to this opinion. His name of wormwood, meaning the bitter accompaniments, during this time of the *third* trumpet, seems to point out some more special and peculiar exercise, and of longer bitterness than a quick death: such as *Mahomet* used. And moreover, if, as some have thought, that the period of this trumpet, opened very early in the *fifth* century, and ran on to near the close of it; it could not be, in point of time, the false Prophet; for certainly he did not commence his imposture until the year 600, at the earliest. But, might it not be (I ask the question, but do not decide,) that heretic, who first shone like a meteor, in the firmament of the *professing* Church, possessing great human learning, but soon fell into the awful error, of denying original sin; thereby lessening, or rather doing away, the necessity of redemption. The person I mean, is *Pelagius*, who lived about this time, and whose horrible doctrines have spawned to this hour. Surely he might well be called *wormwood*; for bitter indeed must be that error which strikes at the very root of the Gospel, and, where received, becomes like a deadly poison, causing men to rot, and swell, and at length die, inflated with a fancied purity of nature born with them, and man's free will sufficient to keep himself pure.

Reader! I pray you, pause over the consideration of this awful heresy. And think, what a mercy it is, that the LORD hath made such a provision, by the sovereignty of his grace, for preserving his called and regenerated children, from the dreadful delusion. Wormwood indeed, it may well be called, when the very waters of the sanctuary, which should run in healing streams, are thus poisoned by those who dispense them, (unsent as they are, uncalled of God,) and which kill the souls of the unawakened, with their bitterness! Now a child of God, through the mercy of divine teaching, hath in himself an effectual remedy, to resist the contagion. Should all the devils in hell, or all the men upon earth, attempt to persuade a child of God, whom God hath convinced of sin, and brought acquainted with the plague of his own heart, that there is no such thing as original sin; his very feelings must everlastingly contradict him. A man taught of God, knows better. He is conscious of indwelling, inbred corruption, and inherent unholiness. He feels his corrupt nature for ever disturbing him, even sometimes in moments of solemn worship. He feels what *Paul* felt, and groans under it as the Apostle groaned, that *when he would do good, evil is present with him*. Think then, what a mercy it is, to have the blessedness of divine teaching, as an antidote against the impudent assertions of man. The LORD knows how distressing it is to a child of God, to feel these inward workings. But better is it, to groan under a sense of inward workings of evil, so as to make CHRIST dear, and to compel the soul to go to him continually for deliverance; than in a fancied holiness within, which, whoever talks of, no man of the fallen sons of *Adam* ever knew; to make men proud, and to keep from CHRIST, instead of leading to CHRIST.

Reader! pause a moment longer. And, if the LORD hath been, and is your Teacher, say, how truly blessed it is, both to have learnt from him original sin, and also the remedy of CHRIST's righteousness and blood-shedding, to do the whole evil of it away. Oh! who shall speak, or describe the preciousness of that grace, whereby the child of God both feels and knows the bitterness of original sin, which he had *before* conversion, together with the remains of corruption *after* conversion; and the blessedness of CHRIST's daily cleansing the soul from both, and from all sin? Oh! the sweet consolations of the LORD's strength, daily made perfect in creature weakness, to carry the child of God on in the life of grace! The child of God knows all these things. They are inlaid truths, in his heart. They are brought forward all the day, and every day, in renewed personal, practical knowledge. To dispute, or contend against them, is to be arguing against our very being. Sure I am of all these things, as much as I am of my very existence. And, blessed LORD; while thou shall bring the whole home to my heart, day by day, as thou art graciously doing, neither men nor devils, can be able to make me relinquish thy truth, in compliment to their false reasoning. Oh! for grace in this CHRIST-despising day and generation, *to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints*. Jude 3.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of

the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

The sounding of the *fourth* trumpet, brought forward a new series of calamities upon the empire, and which are figured to us under the images, of smiting the third part of the sun, and the moon, and the stars. It is well-known, how much the Jews dwelt in figurative language. Indeed, it was the most general method made use of, by ancient nations, to convey instruction. Our LORD himself dwelt much in it. Matt. xiii. 34. By the darkening the luminaries of heaven, is very generally meant, lessening the powers, and reducing the glory, of princes and great men of the earth. At this period, which (if correct according to history,) took place about the middle of the *sixth* century, that is, about the year 540, the empire was brought low indeed. The *Roman* Emperors, both when heathens, and afterwards when *professing* christianity, had, for many centuries, shone as suns, among the lesser lights of the nobles, and as stars in the world. But now the LORD, in his providence, was about to cause a revolution of men and things, with an eye to his Church; and, therefore, as here said, the third part is darkened. And they who are conversant with history will know, that toward the close of this century, and before the rise of the false prophets, *Mahomet* and the *Whore*, at the opening of the succeeding; (who both sprung up nearly together, about the year of our LORD God 600;) the empire gave way to new masters.

But it will be much more to our purpose and improvement, to observe, under this *fourth* trumpet, the progress of error which sprung up to trouble the Church. We have noticed, as we have advanced, under the *three* preceding trumpets, (the first of which began after the empire was changed from heathenism to the *profession* of Christianity,) how much more the true Church of God suffered from false friends, than from the more open enemies. The faithful in CHRIST JESUS were always prepared, through grace, to oppose the open idolatries around them. But when professors of the Gospel arose in the very Church itself, speaking perverse things, and heresies, of various forms, sprung up among them, here were more bitter exercises. By means of the *Arian* heresy, in the denial of CHRIST'S GODHEAD; and the counterpart of the same deadly evil, in calling in question the Person, GODHEAD, and work of the HOLY GHOST, under the *first* and *second* trumpets; the peace and comfort of the Church had been broken in upon. And, if, (as is very generally believed,) the *Pelagian* heresy arose within the period of the *third* trumpet, denying original sin, and insisting upon man's purity and free-will to keep the whole law of God, whereby the necessity of CHRIST'S death, as a sacrifice for sin, became, in such men's views, superseded, and the regeneration of the heart by the HOLY GHOST done away; what a state was the Church of God arrived at by this time? Let not the Reader mistake me. The Church of God, that is, the true Church of God; by which I mean composed only of *regenerated* believers, can ultimately receive no

injury. *The foundation of GOD standeth sure, having this seal; the LORD knoweth them that are his.* 2 Tim. ii. 19. But I am speaking of the *professing* church; the church, as established in the then Empire, as ours is in the present moment. The nation was then, as ours now is, christian in name. And what an awful state was it arrived at under the *fourth* trumpet: if compared to the days of the Apostles, even though in their time the Empire was heathen?

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

What is said in this verse hath no connexion with the former, neither doth it form a part of the trumpet proclamations. It is not one of the seven Angels who had the seven trumpets, but another angel which *John* beheld flying through the midst of heaven, that is, through the midst of the church. And the design of his embassy seems to have been, to call up the more awakened attention of the Apostle to what was coming on under the remaining dispensations, which were to take place when the other three angels should sound their trumpets. The Angel intimates this, by thrice repeating woe to the inhabitants of the earth, when these awful times came on, which should take place, as they sounded their trumpets. And awful indeed they have been, still are, and must be, until the whole predictions contained in them are accomplished! We, who stand upon the hill of time which hath been trodden over by the generations since then, and before us, in ascending the rising ground of observation, and now look back, and behold in those already accomplished, in the correspondence between the prediction and the event, can and do see enough to lament; and much more to deplore in what yet remains to be fulfilled. And the generation now which looks on, if taught by grace, in viewing the whole that is past, compared with the prophecies here recorded by divine inspiration, may be well assured that every tittle must and will be accomplished.

It doth not fall within the compass of this chapter to enter upon the subject. This would be to anticipate it; and it will more properly meet our attention, as we prosecute the history of the trumpets, in their due time and place. But, before we finish the present chapter, I would take occasion, from what the angel here said, (whom *John* beheld flying through the midst of heaven,) to observe, that as the times of the *three* last trumpets, evidently take in, not only the whole period of centuries, which have already run out, from the moment the fifth trumpet was sounded, to the present hour, but to the very end of time (for the seventh is not yet sounded, neither will, until it ushers in the kingdom of CHRIST, as is related, chap. xi. 14, 15.) it will be our wisdom to consider the subject, with an eye to the LORD, more especially from the great interest in which the Church is included, in the events coming on, as well as our own personal concern. There cannot remain the shadow of a doubt but that we are now under the *sixth* trumpet. It hath been a long sounding trumpet

of woe indeed in the Church. Many hundreds of years have passed since it opened; and no man can ascertain how much longer it will continue. It is blessed to consider, that, when ended, all the powers of antichrist will end with it: and that blessed period will come on, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST: and he shall reign for ever and ever.* In the mean time it will be our mercy to watch a gracious God, as a gracious God is everlastingly watching over his people for good. *I know the thoughts I think towards you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Jerem. xxix. 11. *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* Isaiah iii. 10.

But, Reader! with these things in view, and in the fullest assurance of faith, knowing that they must be so, allow me to say one word in closing up this chapter. We behold here an Angel pronouncing, *woe, woe, woe*, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three Angels which were then remaining to be sounded. Most evidently the last of these trumpets hath not yet sounded. The two great powers which oppose CHRIST's kingdom, both in the East, and in the West, are still in their plenitude. The *latter* did indeed lately seem to be somewhat tottering; but is now more than recovered from his halting. And indeed great changes are to be expected according to scripture prophecy before the total fall. The death of the witnesses which is to take place before that event plainly shews that his termination is not yet. Rev. xi. 8, 9. But what I would in this place beg to remark is, that after the *second woe* trumpet is said to be past, the *third woe* (not the *seventh* trumpet) is said to come *quickly*. And this is said, before the *seventh* Angel is said to sound. See Rev. xi. 14.

From hence it should seem abundantly clear and evident, that under the *sixth* trumpet, or at the close of it, there is to be the *third woe*. And whoever considers the subject attentively, must conclude that so it will be. I am not, in the very nature of things, (unless the judgements indeed are now at the door,) likely to live to see it, going fast as I now am the way of all the earth. But without a spirit of prophecy (for there can need none more than is before us) great commotions, such as the *third woe* intimates, may be supposed likely to take place before those two Anti-christian powers of *Mahometanism* and *Popery* are destroyed. And however some men may please themselves with the hope that the world is evangelizing, the HOLY GHOST speaketh expressly, and speaketh to the reverse: in the *latter times there will be great departures from the faith*. 1 Tim. iv. 1. The LORD prepare his people for what he is preparing for them! Who that considers the real state of vital godliness in the present day but must be concerned for the eventual consequence. If there was ever a period more suited for that solemn question of our LORD's one than another, the present is eminently so: *when the SON of Man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?* Luke xviii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

My Soul! behold the grace of thy God, when at opening of the *seventh* seal, and silence took place in the Church, before the new

circumstances of sorrow began, JESUS will be seen at the Altar, in his High Priestly Office, with his golden Censer! Was it not to teach the Church, both then, and now, yea, in all ages, that under every *seal* opened, every *trumpet* sounded, every *vial* poured out, He is unceasingly engaged, for all his redeemed ones, and not a moment intermits his care, but is for ever carrying on the whole purposes of his unchangeable priesthood? Oh! what a blessed view was here opened, for the everlasting consolation of the Church. Ye redeemed of the LORD! Ye Priests of my God! Ye Ministers of the sanctuary! never cease to shew the Church JESUS in this endearing office, as always engaged for his people. And do ye follow up petition after petition, neither keep silence, nor give him rest, until he hath made his *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth. Oh! the preciousness, from this blessed view of our God, that JESUS it is, at the Altar, which offers up in his incense, the prayers of his saints; and both the persons and offerings of his people ascend before God out of this Almighty Angel of the Covenant's hands!

LORD! thy Church finds cause to bless thee to this day, that amidst the destructions which have followed those trumpets, JESUS hath yet a seed to serve him, which are *counted to the LORD for a generation*. And, though heresies still abound, yea, are, in various instances, increasing in the earth; yet *the LORD knoweth them that are his*. Oh! for grace, to be found faithful, and to live above the reproach of men, by living upon the faithfulness of God in CHRIST. And then, while all the woe trumpets have been, or now are sounding, and our God shall shew wonders above, and signs in the earth, beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke, JESUS will own them whom he hath sealed; and the world shall know whose they are, and to whom they belong, when that *great and notable day of the LORD shall come!*

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

The fifth Angel sounds his Trumpet. Great and fearful Signs follow. The first Woe is past. The sixth Angel succeeds, and soundeth his Trumpet; and very awful Events take place in the Earth.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 ¶ And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 ¶ One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

The first thing to be noted in this account, by way of ascertaining the sense and meaning of it, is what is said, that to this star was given the key of the bottomless pit, which clearly defines a *person*. For a star, literally considered, could not receive a key. So that here we gain one point towards our discovery. The next light thrown upon the passage is, that he is said to fall from heaven unto the earth, that is, from the Church, frequently called Heaven. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. xxi. 2. Hence, the person alluded to must have been, by profession at least, of the Church, (that is, one who in words acknowledged CHRIST,) before his fall from it. Now, there is no cha

acter in all the history of mankind, to whom it can be applied with such propriety as *Mahomet*, the false prophet. This impostor, as appears by his history, for a time professed Christianity. And what he hath said of *CHRIST* in his *Alcoran*, though most sadly perverted, shews what information he had acquired in headknowledge, concerning the *LORD JESUS*. Some, however, have thought, that the *Pope of Rome* is here meant. And some have thought, that both *Mahomet* and the *Pope* are alike intended. Certain it is, that both arose much about the same time, at the opening of the *seventh* century, about the year of our *LORD GOD 600*. But I think, that *Mahomet* is principally, if not altogether intended; because the transactions under the *fifth* and *sixth* trumpets, are chiefly, if not altogether, concerning the *East*; whereas the *Pope's* heresy is in the *West*. I confess, indeed, that the power here said to be exercised by him over the bottomless pit, best corresponds with the *Pope*, since by his claims respecting purgatory, it should seem to be the most suited to him. But as the imposture of the false prophet, as well as the *Pope* both sprung from hell, it suits either, or both of them.

There is somewhat very striking in the account here given of opening the bottomless pit, and a smoke arising like the smoke of a furnace, to darken the sun and air. Whether *Mahomet*, or the *Pope*, their counsel is from hell. And the temptations of *Satan*, do not unfrequently darken the bright rays of *CHRIST*, the sun of righteousness, to his people's view. Not that *CHRIST* is himself obscured, for He shines for ever the same. But his people, by reason of the clouds, do not always alike see him; just as the clouds in nature, which make sometimes a dark day. Angels above the clouds, in the clear atmosphere of the heavens, look down upon them, and they are not dark. It is only to us, who inhabit the regions below, which live under their influence, that are sensible of their quality.

I beg the Reader to make the same observation respecting these locusts, as was before made of the key of the bottomless pit, that they mean the persons of men: called locusts because of their number, and swarming as do those pernicious insects of the earth, and because of their deadly quality in poisoning. But that men are meant by them is evident, inasmuch as they were prohibited from hurting the grass, or herbage, or trees. It is men they were to hurt, and them only that were unsealed. There is somewhat very blessed in this information, for several reasons, and I pray the Reader not to overlook either.

First. It forms one of the sweetest thoughts, that the *LORD* had many *then*, and hath many *now*, of his hidden ones, in this *Easter* part of the world, where the Impostor set up his standard, to oppose *CHRIST*; for otherwise, this precept, amounting to a prohibition, that they should only hurt those men which had not the seal of *God* in their foreheads, would have been unnecessary. I beg the Reader not to lose sight of this.

And, *secondly.* Let him take another precious thought from this passage, and observe, that *God* had *sealed* his people, though he permitted them, for wise purposes we cannot explain, to live under such governments.

And, *thirdly.* Let him consider, that though now at this time, the awful delusion of this imposture hath continued for more than

twelve hundred years, and is as great in its horrible tyranny over the consciences and bodies of men as ever; yet they of the LORD's people who are there still, are known to CHRIST, and known by CHRIST; and from time to time, are gathered out, and gathered home to CHRIST, to whom the gathering of his people must be. Gen. xlix. 10.

Some have thought, and I see no reason to reject the observation, that by the *grass* which these locusts were prohibited from hurting, is meant, the humble followers of the LORD, who are low in the earth. And by the *trees* are meant the higher of the LORD's people, who are like the cedars of *Lebanon*. It may be so. But the most blessed thought is, that both, and every other, their safety is in being sealed, secured, and everlastingly blessed, in CHRIST. Come not near any on whom is the mark! Ezek. ix. 6.

I do not mean to speak decidedly, when I say, I humbly presume, of what is said, that it was given to those locusts not to kill them, (that is, the LORD's people,) but that they should be tormented *five months*, is meant, not in relation to their bodies; for, certain it is, the false prophet slaughtered many who refused to abjure CHRIST; neither to their souls, for their power reached not to this spiritual part; but to the electing grace of God in CHRIST, on which account they were sealed. And this view of the subject, if I am right, becomes a sweet and precious subject indeed! Was it not this, (I ask the question,) wherein *Satan* was prohibited, in the instance of *Job*? Behold! said God to the enemy, *he is in thine hand, but save his life*; that is, his *person*, according to the margin in *Isaiah*. Election is personal. Compare *Job* ii. 6. with *Isaiah* xliii. 4.

What is said of the figure of the locusts, their shape, and head, and crowns, together with their having a king over them, becomes only a confirmation, that men are all along intended, and not reptiles. And here again, this authority is so much in resemblance both to *Mahomet* and the *Pope*, that it may be truly said, it is impossible to ascertain which it suits most. They are both properly called *Abaddon*, or *Apollyon*, which signifies a *destroyer*. Which hath destroyed most, is beyond all human knowledge to say; the Impostor of the East, or the *son of perdition*, as the *Pope* is elsewhere called, of the West. 2 *Thess.* ii. 3. But both, we are told, shall be finally cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. *Rev.* xix. 20.

Reader let us pause for a moment, over the solemn subject! What awful events did the *fifth* trumpet dispensation bring, in the permission of *two* such dreadful heresies to arise, one in the East, and the other in the West. Who would have thought, when the empire became christian, though only in the name, and profession of it; that such events would follow? And what a mystery it is, even now, that those antichristian powers should remain down to the present æra, through a period of more than *twelve* hundred years!

One word more, while we are in a world of mysteries. What a time *Satan* hath had, from *Adam's* fall, to the present hour, over the whole earth, yea, God's children also, while uncalled by grace; and what ten thousand sighs, and groans, hath he called forth by his cruelty, from every heart of our nature, from the first of creation, to the end of the time-state, for to that time his empire is to extend?

And doth the Reader ponder these things with amazement, and do they appear to him perfectly unfathomable? Let him then turn his thoughts within, and for a moment study that world of iniquity; I mean his own heart. And, if so be that the LORD hath called my Reader, by his regenerating grace, to a new, and spiritual life in CHRIST JESUS; he will learn more at home, by way of explaining things abroad, than all the books upon earth (excepting the Book of God) can teach him on the subject, to all eternity.

In false prophets, and lying deceivers, we behold the word of God fulfilled. They were of old *ordained to this condemnation.* Jude 4. In Satan and his devices, we discover the cause of his malice; *the devil is come down upon the earth having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* Rev. xii. 12. In all these, we discover from God's word, both *cause* and *effect*. But, when God chooseth the heart of a sinner for his temple, and He who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is HOLY, prefers to abide *there*, which before was occupied by unclean devils; and instead of taking delight in making the heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, sets up his throne in the broken and contrite heart, saying, *here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein?* here is a subject, enough to set all the world a wondering, and can only be explained by the words of God himself: *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD!* Isaiah lv. 8.

13 ¶ And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God.

14 ¶ Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Here we have the opening of the dispensation under the *sixth* trumpet ushered in with this solemn preface: *One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter!* Reader! let us attend to what is here said, and ponder it well. For most certain it is, the present time-state of the Church is now under it. And when it will finish, and the *two woes* in it be accomplished, who shall say? Great events are involved in it, and which must come to pass before it will end; these things are most certain. It hath already run on to many hundred years; and the *hour*, and *day*, and *month*, and *year* allowed to it, are not yet fulfilled.

One point concerning this *sixth* trumpet, most clearly proves that it refers to the *East*; namely, in that the river *Euphrates* is by name mentioned. And the establishment of the empire of the impostor *Mahomet*, and his successors, over the East, is no less a proof that his is the delusion meant. Indeed, the propagating his imposture by sword, and with the army almost incredible, as here described, is a full confirmation.

I take great pleasure in calling the Reader's attention once more to the sealing of *Israel*, as represented Chapter vii. who occupied those parts, where the impostor's sword was to make great ravages. And, I beg the Reader never to lose sight of it, as often as he calls to mind the vast territories *Mahometanism* and *Paganism* still occupy in the East, and will occupy, until that blessed period shall arrive, when the *Deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob*. In the mean time, it is a rich and full consolatory thought, the *LORD's sealed ones are saved ones*. *JESUS* hath marked them as his own; and it is his province to gather them out of *all places, whither they are scattered in the cloudy and dark day*. Ezek. xxxiv. 12.

One of the most interesting parts in this whole book of God, and which meets us more or less, every where through it, and in all directions, is the presence of *CHRIST*, giving commands, and guiding the whole events of his Church. This the Prophet *Ezekiel* learnt, in that vision which he saw, and from whence he was enabled, and directed to teach the Church. Ezek. i. 26. And *John*, in like manner, in these visions he here relates, is observing the same thing.

When the sixth Angel sounded, *John* saith, *he heard a voice from the four horns of the golden Altar, which is before God.* Several very interesting views arise from hence.

First. It could be no other than CHRIST that *John* heard, for the golden Altar is the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, for intercession. So that, a voice from hence, must have been JESUS speaking. He is the only Mediator, and High Priest. *Exod. xxx. 1—10.*

Secondly. It is blessed to recollect he is always there. The opening of this trumpet dispensation, opens with this view of him, carrying on the office of his everlasting, unchanging priesthood. *Heb. vii. 21—28.*

Thirdly. His command to the Angel, to loose the four Angels, proves no less, that he is a Priest upon his throne, and whom all the angels worship and obey. *Zech. vi. 12, 13. Heb. i. 3—6. 1 Pet. iii. 22.*

Fourthly. The sameness of CHRIST, in his Person, in his Royalty, in his government, and watchful eye over his Church, is sweetly set forth on this occasion, as in the instance before, when he ascended from the East to seal his servants. *There,* the four Angels were commanded by him, to hold the winds till he had sealed them. *And here,* the four Angels, now the LORD had sealed his servants, were to let loose the ravages of the army on the *Euphrates*, for the carrying on the purposes of his government. Reader! what a mercy it is to have such an High Priest, such an Head, and Husband of his Church and People! Whatever events yet remain to be accomplished, under this *sixth* trumpet dispensation, oh! for grace to call to mind JESUS is at the four horns of the golden Altar before GOD! Oh! for faith to hear his gracious voice, as *John* heard, and to have our souls made blessed as *John's* was; in the grace and faith that is in CHRIST JESUS!

The close of this Chapter is very awful. It is said, that amidst all the persecutions which these enemies brought against the Church, and with which also they oppressed the world, the innumerable murders they committed, the sorceries they practised, their fornication and thefts, they felt no sorrow, neither repentance. Reader! this is a sad but true representation of man, in his fallen, unrenewed state, and universally becomes true, not only in the instance of those here spoken of, but of the whole earth. There can be no true repentance, but from the grace of GOD. There can be no grace; but by regeneration. Without the new-birth, the heart remains hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin; yea, the spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. Hence, amidst all the studied reforms of men, all the fastings, and penance, and alms-giving, and stripes, pilgrimages, and vows, which the world hath set up, not an individual of the human race, from *Adam* downward, ever truly repented, unless a work of sovereign grace by regeneration, is wrought in the heart, to bring the sinner to GOD. Till GOD takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh, there is no alteration of the old nature. If all the devils now in hell were liberated from their chains, devils they would still remain. And the damned spirits of the dead now there, must be everlastingly the same, since no repentance is given them. Think then, what an unspeakable mercy it must be, in the person and every instance of the LORD's people, when the LORD

calls them by his grace, *from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear Son!* Coloss. i. 12, 13.

I must not close this Chapter, without first observing, that what is here said of worshipping devils, and idols of gold and silver, and of their murders, and sorceries, and the like, seems to be much more suited to the *Western* heresy, than to the *Eastern*. We do not find in the fabled religion of *Mahomet*, and his imposture, any thing like what is here said of the worship of idols, though abounding, as his infamous doctrine doth, of fornications and adulteries, and uncleanness, which the false prophet grants to his followers, yea, making the future paradise, which he holds out to them in another world, to be made up of the fullest gratification of all their sensual lusts. But the worshipping idols, in praying to crucifixes and the images of pretended saints, these things belong to the *Western* heresy under the Pope, and indeed very clearly define that character. She also, no less than *Mahomet*, hath her allowances of fornication, and uncleanness, and murders innumerable in her inquisition through all ages, even to the present hour, and is said to be *drunken with the blood of the saints*. Chap. xvii. 6. And what can it be more properly called than *sorceries*, the exorcisms and pretended holy water, which are used to amuse and deceive the credulous? And what less name than *thefts* can it be called, the immense sums which in all ages have been gathered by the Pope and his priests, in pretending to pray souls out of purgatory, and putting up masses for the dead? These things, which are the notorious traffic of the *Western* heresy, plainly define the character here meant. So, that though the former part in the opening of the *sixth* trumpet began at the river *Euphrates*, in the Turkish dominions, and most evidently alluded to *Mahomet* and his imposture, yet this latter part, as plainly refers to the heresy in the *West*, and points to the Pope, and his imposture. And there can be no impropriety in considering both. For the sixth trumpet includes in its operations, a period of many hundred years, and is not yet finished, neither will indeed, until *in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the Prophets*. Chap. x. 7. Reader! pause over the contemplation, as we behold both these horrible delusions, which have been permitted as the scourge of the Church, for so many ages and generations. And while meditating on the subject, look up for grace, and you will find some very sweet and precious instructions arising therefrom, if so be the Lord is your Teacher.

As, first. The opposition from hell, to CHRIST and his kingdom, hath been all along permitted for the greater glory of God, and the good of his Church. The serpent's head when bruised, to intimate in due appointed time, his total and everlasting destruction, was to be accompanied with the bruising the seed of the Woman in the heel. CHRIST eminently proved this, in his unequalled sufferings. And all his redeemed, from the first martyr *Abel*, down to the present hour, and so on to the end of time, prove the same.

Secondly. The conflict though painful, hath a sure issue. The God of peace will bruise *Satan* under the feet of all his redeemed shortly. *Satan*, having by his temptations overcome our nature, and involved the Church, as well as the world, in the ruins of the fall,

hath made even CHRIST's mystical members, his lawful captives. *For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.* 2 Pet. ii. 19. But the head of those members hath overcome him, and therefore the LORD thus speaks. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive be delivered? But thus saith the LORD, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine, and all flesh shall know, that I the LORD am thy SAVIOR, and thy REDEEMER, the mighty one of Jacob.* Isaiah xlix. 24—26.

Thirdly. In the mean time, GOD's sealed ones, are all saved ones. *No weapon formed against them shall prosper.* Their enemies may be permitted to persecute, yea, burn, destroy, or kill the body. And martyrdom is blessed, when it is endured for CHRIST's sake. Prophets, Apostles, and Saints have waded through blood to the kingdom. Yea, JESUS himself, pre-eminent in all things, was in pre-eminent in suffering. But the end is peace. *Fear not little flock, it is your FATHER's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Luke xii. 32.

Lastly. When the sixth trumpet is fully run out, and all the woes to the Church are ended, then comes the Church's everlasting triumph. Then that event will take place, and which all the redeemed shall see, and they whose souls are now under the Altar calling for judgment, shall all rejoice together, when *the devil that deceived the world, and the beast, and false prophet shall be all cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* Rev. xx. 10. Amen!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold how the LORD's judgments rise higher and higher, in the scale of punishment! The four first trumpets were bringing forward very awful visitations in the earth, but those two of the woe trumpets, how far have they already exceeded in affliction! And who shall say what yet remains to be unfolded, before the period of the sixth trumpet is finished! Let you and I pause, as we contemplate the subject. Let us behold and look back over the long space of so many centuries which have run out, since at the voice of the sixth trumpet sounding, the LORD CHRIST gave command, to loose the four angels at the river *Euphrates*. Contemplate what ravages have been made! what slaughters followed. And yet no reform, no repentance, no one effect of contrition produced, by the chastisement! Let us next look at home. Doth not the question arise, nationally considered, *what then are we better than they!* No, in no wise. What, though the worship of images is not by law established, and prayers to images and saints we are not commanded to do, yet, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST more honored than before? Is his GODHEAD, and his blood and righteousness, considered by all ranks of our people, as the very foundation of *the faith once delivered to the saints?* Alas! how greatly the reverse in this CHRIST-despising day and generation! And while like a flood, the awful

heresy of denying his GODHEAD is running through the land, and threatens to carry all before it, there are no laws of restraint to stop the pulpit or the press, from saying or doing as their corrupt nature unsubdued by grace may tempt them, against the glorious Person and finished salvation of the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And what may we suppose will follow such daring ungodliness. Surely, if we calculate from what is past, what is probable to follow, before the sixth woe trumpet hath finished his period, very desolating consequences may be looked for. The ear of faith may hear that voice which was once heard and again and again repeated; and never more suited than now. *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the LORD, shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this.*

One sweet thought will comfort the LORD's faithful ones, under all. JESUS is as the helm. All plagues, whether locusts or men, whether fire or sword, have their power from him. The Church of God is still the Church of God, and every one is sealed by him. Oh! the precious assurance. Here then Reader, every child of God may safely say with the Prophet, LORD! *in the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee.*

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

John beholds in vision another mighty Angel come from Heaven. He hath a Book in his Hand. At his crying aloud, seven Thunders make their Responses. He swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that Time should be no longer. John is commanded to take the Book from him, and to eat it.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left foot on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

This is a short but highly interesting Chapter. Between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh trumpet, CHRIST appears to *John* in vision, to prepare his mind for the relation of certain events, yet to be accomplished. And we may suppose both from CHRIST's coming, and coming as a mighty Angel or Messenger of his own dispensation, it is of the highest signification. I beg the Reader to look at what is here said with the utmost attention, and remark, with me, some few of the striking particularities, distinguished both in CHRIST's Person, and the purpose of his coming.

And, *first*. His Person. *John* describes him as a mighty Angel. Mighty indeed, for he is, as the Prophet, ages before his incarnation, spoke of him by the SPIRIT of inspiration; *His name* (said he) *shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace.* Isaiah ix. 6. And who can question these things, when he hears this mighty Angel, as in the next Chapter, declaring that he will give power to his two witnesses to prophecy. Chap. xi. 3. Who hath witnesses but God. Isaiah xliii. 10—12. What Angel ever talked of his witnessess? Yea, more than all, who giveth the power to prophecy, but God? Must not that man be hoodwinked indeed, that reads this scripture, and yet questions CHRIST's GODHEAD? The whole world, infidels as well as believers, are compelled to acknowledge that CHRIST is the speaker, when he saith, I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy. And who can give a spirit of prophecy to the prophets, but the LORD God of the prophets; or what shall their prophecies be witnesses of, but of Him, *to whom all the prophets give witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins?* Acts x. 43. Oh! wretched men, deniers of the GODHEAD of my LORD! Well will it be for you, if the LORD peradventure should give you repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that ye may be recovered out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. *Kiss the SON lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psm. ii. 12.

Secondly. This mighty Angel is said to come down from heaven, *clothed with a cloud.* By which I apprehend, that as he came to publish very awful things, such as, that *time should be no longer*, and, as the next Chapter declares, *the slaughter of his two witnesses*; it was intended to shew, how dark and cloudy, for a while, would be the dispensation now about to take place in the Church, at the close of the *sixth* trumpet, and before the opening of the *seventh*. *Clouds and darkness* are said to be round about him; while *righteousness and judgment* are the habitation of his throne. Psm. xcii. 2. Reader! ponder this well. Remember the *sixth* trumpet is still here operating, when CHRIST was thus seen. The witnesses are not slain. Perhaps the most awful times, which ever took place in the Church of God, since the foundation of the world will then be. And if so, what are those men dreaming of, who talk of evangelizing the whole earth, whom God hath not evangelized, and who run unsent, whether the HOLY GHOST hath forbidden or not, as in the case of the Apostles, when he himself ordained them they were not suffered to preach the word in *Asia* and *Bithynia*. Acts xvi. 6, 7.

Thirdly. Though CHRIST was clothed with a cloud, perhaps, as I before remarked, it meant to intimate awful dispensations were coming on, yet we find the rainbow was still upon his head. Sweet and precious token to all his dear people. The same bow, which at the destruction of the old world, God said he would set in the cloud, in token of his everlasting Covenant, is still there, and must be there for ever. JESUS is the whole of it. And all clouds, and all afflictions, which drown *Egypt* in destruction, and everlasting darkness are to the LORD's Israel, messengers of sanctification and safety. Oh! how blessed is it, to behold our JESUS, God's rainbow, in every cloud. As God cannot look to the Church in any way, or in any direction without looking through the rainbow which encircles the whole throne, so neither to his people, will he look but in and through his dear SON. Reader! keep this all along in view. This mighty Angel, this precious Almighty God-Man, the LORD JESUS CHRIST *John* saw, had a rainbow upon his head. So is he now. So will he everlastingly be. He comes as the bow of the Covenant; yea, he is the whole Covenant. And as GOD our FATHER always beholds the Church in, and through him, so do the Church behold GOD our FATHER, always and only in and through Him.

Fourthly. Beside these manifestations of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we are told, that *his face was as it were the Sun*, while his feet were *pillars of fire*. Perhaps to intimate, that while the Church was about to be brought into fiery afflictions, and in which we know from history, numbers of CHRIST's dear members were burnt at the stake for their adherence to him, yet, the LORD's face would shine upon them, with a continued sunshine of love. He would, lift up the light of his countenance upon them, and give them peace. Reader! do you know any thing of the history of your own country? Remember, the reign of this *sixth* trumpet hath been many hundreds of years. Oh! what numbers of the blessed reformers, burnt for CHRIST's sake in the time of persecution in this land, went in chariots of fire to glory, who, from the light of CHRIST's countenance shining upon them, during the time of their martyrdom, declared, that the passage at the stake in the deepest suffering, became like a bed of roses to their spirits! And remember the reign of the *sixth* trumpet is not ended. Yea, the *two witnesses* which are to be slain before it be passed, have not yet been brought forth in the street of spiritual *Sodom* and *Egypt* for slaughter. Rev. xi. 8. When they are, JESUS will be again seen by faith, by them, though clothed with a cloud, and his feet as pillars of fire; yet, with his glorious rainbow upon his head, and his face shining with ten thousand times greater glory, than the sun in love and grace, and with the sweetest countenance of complacency upon them. Oh! the preciousness of JESUS!

But the subject goes on. *John* saith, that this mighty Angel had in his hand *a little book open*. In the former vision of the ministry of the book, which the same glorious Person, was then said to have taken out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, the book was sealed. And he, and he alone, was found worthy to open it. That had been then opened, and the purport of it appears to have been now in a great part fulfilled, under the ministry of seals and trumpets. But now, before the final accomplishment of the trumpets, JESUS comes to his servant again. And now he tells him, and his

Church through him, that when the sixth trumpet shall have run fully out, and the seventh trumpet comes to be sounded, there shall be time no longer. CHRIST's compleat reign on earth shall begin, and *the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15.

But though this will be the final consummation, and the mystery of God concerning his Church upon earth shall then be finished, yet, as great events are to take place, in the world, and in the Church, from that period in which CHRIST thus appeared to his servant *John*, before the whole is closed, the LORD brings in his hand an *open book*, and which *John* is to eat, that is, to receive the contents of it in his mind, and which are to be made known to the Church, by way of comforting the LORD's people, during the long periods yet to expire, before the accomplishment of the whole. So that here opens a new and distinct prophecy, concerning the great things of God. And though the subject is one and the same, of this whole Book of the Revelation, yet, from the opening of this Chapter, in which CHRIST appears to prepare his servant's mind for new prophecies on the subject, we may be on the look out, for other plans of divine teaching, besides the ministry of *seals* and *trumpets*; and to learn from the pouring out of *vials*, God's further revelations to his Church. The new series of prophecies opens with the beginning of the *twelfth* Chapter. This, and the intermediate one, the eleventh, are designed as preparatory to it.

There is somewhat very sublime, in what is said of CHRIST setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth. Probably to intimate his sovereignty over all. For as he came from heaven, where all angels, principalities, and powers are subject unto him, so here, by those acts, he denotes, his Almighty power upon earth, as the Prophet hath described him; *his dominion being an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation. He doeth, saith the Prophet, according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?* Dan. iv. 34, 35.

And what majesty is expressed, under the words of crying with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth. He is called indeed, *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, to intimate the sovereignty in his Israel. And the answer of the seven thunders is very sublime also, as if making responses to their Creator. Some have considered those thunders as figurative of kingdoms, and some have supposed by them is meant, *ministers* of the Gospel, sometimes called *Boanerges*, or sons of thunder. I do not presume to determine upon it. One thing, however, is remarkable, that *John*, when those thunders answered CHRIST's voice, thought himself called upon to write, as if, while thunders echoed to the LORD, well might his servants. But, as all that was now doing, was only preparatory to what *John* would be taught, he was commanded to wait, until better informed what to write of, when the LORD JESUS came to teach him.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 ¶ And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer :

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

We cannot read what follows, of the LORD JESUS lifting up his hand to heaven, in a way of solemnity, and swearing to the truth of what he was about to deliver, without being struck with the sublimity of the whole. Let the Reader figure to himself CHRIST as GOD-MAN, with one foot upon the earth, and the other on the sea, to imply (as hath been before observed) his supreme authority, and then hear him swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever, and created all things, that *there should be time no longer*. Who less than GOD could so determine? And who but GOD could accomplish such a purpose? We read in another scripture, that when GOD *made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*. And that this was GOD our SAVIOR who thus swore to Abraham is most evident, as may be seen by looking at the account. It was GOD, it is said, that called upon Abraham to offer up his son a burnt-offering. And it was the angel of the LORD that called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, *by myself have I sworn, saith the LORD*. See Gen. xxii. 1, 2, 15, 16. And the HOLY GHOST confirms the whole in the scripture before quoted. Heb. vi. 13. Can any thing be more plain than that in the whole transaction it was GOD our SAVIOR who is all along spoken of? And who, indeed, should it be but Him? He is the only visible JEHOVAH through all the scripture. *No man hath seen GOD at any time*. In the invisibility of his essence, as GOD, it is impossible to see him. *But one only begotten SON, who lay in the bosom of the FATHER, and from that bosom came forth in our nature, he hath declared him*. John i. 18. See Heb. vi. 13. and Commentary. Hence, therefore, in this oath, that there should be time no longer, we behold CHRIST acting in his high character of Mediator, and in the name of the whole GODHEAD, confirming by oath, the counsel of his will.

The days of the voice of the seventh angel were to take place before the period CHRIST swore to should come on, when time should be no longer. The mystery of GOD was first to be finished, that is, the mystery of those wonderful events concerning the Church of GOD, in relation to those anti-christian powers which opposed CHRIST, the Eastern and the Western heresy. But not the mysteries of GOD finished, or made known, in relation to that mystery of the Three sacred Persons in the GODHEAD, the mystery of GOD and man in one Person, and the mystery of CHRIST being one with his Church. These things are never to be finished, neither can be in their very nature so explained, as to be no longer mysterious. The meaning evidently is, that the period will come, under the *seventh trumpet*

sounding, when the powers of darkness, whose opposition to CHRIST is now so mysterious, shall be finished, *and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 ¶ And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

This is a very interesting part of this chapter. *John* is ordered to go to CHRIST, and to take out of his hand the open book. Now observe. When CHRIST took the book from the hand of his FATHER, it was sealed. He, and He alone, can open to us the decrees of GOD. *I am the way*, saith CHRIST, *and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the FATHER but by me.* John xiv. 6. Had not CHRIST come forth from GOD, to make known GOD, never should we have known the way to GOD. But when *John*, or any man, takes the book from JESUS, it must be opened to us, or we shall never understand it. Reader! except JESUS gives the book, opened by himself, to those who minister in his name; and except JESUS by his SPIRIT ordains them; ministers, as they call themselves, or as they are called of men, had better never have ran to the service. Popes, bishops, or prelates, not sent of CHRIST, will have a woeful account to give in, the end of the day. *I have not sent these prophets*, (saith the LORD,) *yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* Jerem. xxiii. 21.

What a lovely view is here given of *John*! Immediately, on command, he went to CHRIST. To whom shall the LORD's servants go but to their Master? From whom can they receive their authority, or their instruction, but from Him? Sweetly *Peter*, who knew this, said, LORD! *to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life!* And what *John* saith of the sweet taste of the book, and the bitter effects afterwards, is fulfilled in all GOD's servants, who minister in his name, as well as in the hearts of those who are minis-

tered unto. When first the word is received, in joy of the HOLY GHOST, with much affliction, by reason of our conscious sense of sin, every thing we hear of CHRIST, and feel of CHRIST, is sweet. But when persecutions come on, and the conflicts of flesh and spirit are at the height, bitter are the seasons of trial. And what it is with the faithful followers of the LORD, in their private life and conversation, such, in an eminent degree, is it with the ministers of CHRIST in their public ministry. Oh! who shall say what soul exercises he goeth through, both for himself and people, while laboring in the word and doctrine; that is, faithful to God and to souls? LORD! do thou give to thy servants grace, that in all things they may approve themselves ministers of God!

REFLECTIONS.

Oh! thou Almighty Angel, whom *John* saw coming down from heaven! Give me, by faith, to behold thee with the delightful rainbow upon thine head, in token of the everlasting Covenant! LORD JESUS! whatever clouds or darkness thy divine dispensations are clothed with, still never will my faith despond, as long as JESUS appears to my view with his rainbow. Though the Church be in the fiery furnace, and clouds and darkness all around, yet while God my FATHER is beholding his Church through CHRIST, and in CHRIST, the bow in the cloud; and while JESUS's face towards his people is as the sun in divine grace, and love, and favor, and the Church looking to CHRIST, and in CHRIST, and through CHRIST to God, all is well.

Blessed LORD! thou hast sworn, while taking possession of heaven, earth, and sea as thine, that the hour is hastening when time shall be no longer. Oh! then prepare thy Church, prepare thy people for this great day of our God! LORD, in thine own time, which is the best time, finish the mystery of God, in breaking down all the powers of antichrist, and thereby finish the mystery of iniquity, which now so much opposeth thy pure Gospel.

LORD! give me the same spirit of obedience as thy servant *John*. Make me to eat and digest thy saving truths. Let all be sweet in thee, however bitter in the world, from flesh and blood. Kings, and nations, and tongues, shall hear thy prophecies, and all thy people shall praise thee.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

John, at the Command of the Angel, measureth the Temple. The LORD speaks of his two Witnesses: their Power. Their Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The seventh Angel soundeth his Trumpet. The great Events which follow.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and

measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

The beloved Apostle is here employed by the LORD, to measure the temple of God, and the Altar, and them that worship therein. This latter clause of the people, throws a light upon the former, and seems to explain, that, by the whole is meant the Church, the true Church of regenerated believers. The word of GOD, in a great variety of places, speaks of GOD's people as a Church founded on CHRIST. GOD the FATHER, ages before CHRIST's incarnation, called upon the Church to behold that he laid in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Isaiah xxviii. 16. And GOD the HOLY GHOST by Peter declares, that this was CHRIST, to whom the Church, coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of GOD and precious, became as lively stones, and were built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by JESUS CHRIST. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 8. Psm. cxviii. 22. Acts iv. 11, 12. Ephes ii. 19—22. Rev. xxi. 23.

The allusion which is here made, to the original temple at Jerusalem, of the Altar and Court without, seems also to have been intended, as typical of CHRIST and his Church. The LORD makes the bodies of his people, his temple. He calls Zion his rest, and declares that he will dwell in it, for he hath a delight in it. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. Psm. cxxxii. 13, 14. 2 Cor. vi. 16. By the Altar may be intended, CHRIST, our New Testament Altar, High Priest, and Sacrifice. And by John's measuring of it, may be implied seeking from the LORD grace, to contemplate the infinite dimensions of his boundless love, in the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it, in that love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge. Ephes. iii. 16. And by the worshippers are meant, the true faithful followers of the LORD; who worship GOD in spirit, rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh. Philip. iii. 3.

I do not conceive, that this measurement of the Church, was intended to imply any thing in this place, similar to what was done under the former visions, when the LORD himself sealed his people before the four Angels, which held the winds, were to execute their orders. But it should seem rather to have been at this time, graciously intended by our LORD, to let John understand by his own measurement of it, that JESUS had his Church still, in all its dimensions, that he knew all his members, and watched over them. This, as it strikes me, was the gracious design in our most gracious LORD. The time was now hastening towards the close of the sixth trumpet. And the total overthrow of both the impostures, in the East and in the West, was coming on. But before these things, the LORD's two faithful witnesses were to prophecy in sackcloth. And when they had fulfilled their ministry, they should be slain, and all the other events

follow, introductory to the sounding of the *seventh* trumpet. Hence, therefore, the LORD JESUS commands *John*, first to measure the Church and people. Reader! it is a sweet thought, and everlastingly to be cherished with the utmost affection in the mind, that CHRIST hath a Church in the worst of times. There is even now, a *remnant, according to the election of grace*. Graciously he watches over it. Sweetly JESUS sings to it, which he calls his vineyard of red wine, for even in bloody times, the song must go on. *I the LORD do keep it*, JESUS saith. *I will water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.

3 ¶ And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 ¶ These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

We here enter upon one of the most interesting parts of this whole book of prophecy. I venture to call it so, as it concerns the Church in the present hour. For upon the presumption that it could be ascertained, respecting those *two witnesses* of the LORD, and of the accomplishment of the events here spoken of in this Chapter, a key would be given with it, to unlock the greater part, if not the whole cabinet of this portion of God's most holy word. I do not mean, however, from what I have now said, to intimate as though any such discoveries will be made to any man, or to any set of men, as shall lead to the accomplishment of such purposes. Indeed, I have already observed in the preface to this very Book, that it appears to me, to be the general will of God, none of his prophecies (except in special cases) shall be so known, before the predictions come to be fulfilled. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe, that though this be the will and pleasure of God, on the general subject of prophecy, yet, he hath as graciously been pleased, while keeping from his people the knowledge of the precise time, for the accomplishment of his purposes, to give them certain insights, for marking the progress as they go. And under this view I venture to repeat, that the clearer apprehension we can make, in relation to those *two witnesses* of the LORD through his teaching, the greater apprehension we shall have of those great events, connected with them.

Under these impressions, I request permission from the Reader, to propose an observation or two, before I enter upon the subject, that I may be perfectly understood, while bringing forward what I have to offer on this point. And I beg to do it in the most humble and unassuming manner. This *Poor Man's Commentary* is, as the title intimates, for humble Readers. It is intended more for the Poor in spirit, than for the learned in human wisdom. It aims not to impose my opinion, but rather from fair statings, to invite the Reader, under divine teaching, to form his own. Hence it hath been my study all along, in points not immediately connected with vital truths, to propose, rather than to decide. But in the momentous doctrines, in which the very life of the believer depends, I have indeed, and to the latest moment of my being, through grace, I am resolved to do, *earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints.*

Here I feel a boldness well warranted of God on those solemn doctrines, such, I mean, as the GODHEAD of CHRIST, the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the HOLY GHOST; and the mystery of the THREE in ONE, which bear record in heaven, on those glorious fundamentals of faith, and of all that is dear to the real christian; here I assume a freedom for an unalterable firmness, which will admit of no accommodation. On this ground I contend, and contend earnestly. In this war, I neither give nor take quarter. With such as deny those doctrines, which are dearer to me than life, will I never knowingly mingle. Very sure I am, notwithstanding the accommodating temper of the present day, in the attempt to amalgamate the different creeds, under the specious pretence of promoting God's glory, his glory cannot be promoted by such dissimulation; neither can persons of such opposite doctrines, be found together, however meeting here, in the world to come. I enter my protest against such things. I should consider it high treason, to the majesty of my God and SAVIOR, to smother my faith in his GODHEAD; and be found with those who openly deny it. On this ground I compliment no man. Under this banner I take my stand. And here I pray to be found faithful, in life and death: in time and to all eternity.

Having said thus much, I beg permission from the Reader, to offer another observation. I enter with great diffidence on the subject concerning those *two witnesses*, inasmuch, as some of the greatest men, since the day of our LORD, that ever lived upon the earth, next to the Apostles, have erred, (as is plainly proved, by the event not corresponding to their prediction,) in calculating the time of their slaughter. Those errors of theirs, arose from misdating the period, of the *thousand, two hundred, and threescore days*. And from hence we learn, that it is impossible to form a clear judgment when it will be, unless the LORD had marked the data from whence the reckoning is to be made. One thing appears certain. Their death is to be under the sixth trumpet. So are the events which are to follow, when the witnesses shall again be re-animated. Hence, therefore, we may safely conclude, that the *thousand, two hundred, and threescore days*, are not yet run out.

From premising these things, I will now beg the Reader to attend with me to what the LORD hath here said, concerning his *two wit-*

nesses, to whom he hath given power to prophesy for this long period. And, I enter upon the subject the rather, with some little confidence, inasmuch as the advance the Church hath made into the *nineteenth* century from the opening of the *sixth* trumpet, favor our observations for more correctness, in forming conclusions from what is past, in humble waitings for what is to come.

The first point, if it were discoverable, would be to ascertain, who these witnesses are? It would form the subject of no small volume, or perhaps of many volumes, even to enumerate the variety of opinions, which have been given, in all ages of the Church, in relation to this one point. But yet, the subject stands just where it did. No man, as yet, hath been able to ascertain the matter; and perhaps will not, until the LORD himself shall explain it, in the accomplishment. I shall just state before the Reader the mere outlines of the different opinions; and leave it with him, under the LORD's grace, to form his own conclusions.

The great difficulty seems to be, in the very opening of the subject, to discover whether those two witnesses are Persons, or Things. They who favor the idea of *Persons*, have talked of many public characters, from *Enoch*, and *Elijah*, down to the very time of the Reformation from Popery. But a great difficulty lies in the way here, of limiting it to any particular persons; as the time of their prophesying, a thousand two hundred and sixty days, which in prophetic language means years, far surpasseth the boundary of human life, to individuals. And, if this be obviated in the supposition of a succession of persons, there doth not seem a reason for confining the number to *two*.

They who conceive the two witnesses to mean not persons, but things, have concluded, that the Two Testaments of Scripture are intended. And, very certain it is, that a considerable degree of probability is on this side of the argument. For they are the highest, the best, and most unanswerable witnesses, for CHRIST. JESUS himself appealed to the Old Testament, in proof of his Messiahship, when he said to the Jews: *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.* John v. 39. And, with respect to those two witnesses being clothed in sackcloth, there is no objection in this, to the scriptures; for when we consider, that the whole of the prophecy is veiled in figure, it is no distortion of the figure to say, the scriptures are mourning in sackcloth, from the little attention the world pays to them, in their testimony to CHRIST. And there seems a very strong reason to suppose, that the two witnesses are meant for the scriptures, when it is said, that these are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the GOD of the earth. For the Prophet describes the gifts and graces of the SPIRIT, under the figure of olive trees; Zech. iv. 3. and, in this very scripture, JESUS himself told *John*, that the *candlesticks* mean the *Churches*. Rev. i. 20. So then, under this view, the scriptures are represented by the figure of olive trees; and the Churches which receive the witness of the scriptures, are as candlesticks.

But others have thought, that the *two witnesses* more probably intend, the two Churches of CHRIST, the *Jew* and *Gentile*; both which are witnesses in themselves, of the power of his salvation;

and against whom, both the Impostures of the East and West, are alike inveterate.

I am free to confess, that I am wholly uninformed, with which to say the truth is, or whether either. The LORD, in his own time, which is always the best time, will shew. In the mean season, it will be well for the LORD's people to be always on the watch-tower, and to be attentive to the LORD's testimonies concerning himself. If it be the scriptures of GOD which are meant, certain it is, that, as this scripture saith, if any hurt them by blaspheming their testimony, denying their witness, fire doth proceed from their mouth for their destruction: for the word of GOD is *as a fire, and as an hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces.* Jerem. xxiii. 29. And JESUS saith, *the word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.* John xii. 48. And, in relation to what is said, of shutting heaven, and having power over the waters; we only know what we do know of these things, by the word of GOD.

We shall have occasion hereafter, when we meet with the subject again, to consider it somewhat more particularly. In the mean time I shall leave the Reader to his own reflections.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 ¶ And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand : and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 ¶ The second woe is past : and behold the third woe cometh quickly.

A vast subject of divine truths is included within the compass of these verses. But I must use shortness. And indeed, the subject itself is so enveloped in mystery, that our greatest searches go but a little way, in the unfolding. When the witnesses shall have finished their testimony, probably meaning, when the elect Church of God shall have been fully instructed in the truth as it is in Jesus, and all that are to be gathered from the varieties of the earth, shall have been brought home; those witnesses, whether persons, or things; shall have the last, and most violent persecution raised against them; from the Beast, whose doctrine first came from hell; for it is *after the working of Satan*: 2 Thess. ii. 9. and shall make such open attack upon them, as to overcome them, and slay them. And, such shall be manifested the bitterness against them by their enemies, that their bodies shall lay unburied, in the street of the great city *Rome*; called *Sodom*, from its filth and uncleanness, and *Egypt*, from its tyranny and oppression.

We learn here, that the truth as it is in Jesus, is to undergo a most violent attack, towards the close of all things. The last bite of the Beast, will be the most dreadful. The laying unburied in the street of the city, cannot mean *literally*, for the city itself is *spiritually* considered. So that this is no objection to the *two witnesses* being the two Testaments, on account of their being said to be killed. For the totally suppressing their truths, is virtually silencing them; and therefore may be said to be killing them. And, their being publicly exposed as dead, may well apply to the publicity through the earth, that the Beast had put them to silence, and to contempt.

The triumph of the ungodly, and their sending gifts to one another upon the occasion of the death of the witnesses, are finely expressed, to shew the bitterness of the heart against the ways of God. Oh! what delight is it now, with bad men, to behold any thing of supposed evil happening to the godly. *Aha! say they, so would we have it!* And with what joy do the graceless behold the afflictions of the Lord's Israel!

The resurrection of the witnesses, is the opening of the subject, to the final overthrow of both the Beast and the False Prophet. Their ascension to heaven in a cloud, is not literally to be accepted in this sense, but rather of their being publicly owned, in the more glorious state of the Church, now hastening to be established, in the thousand years reign of CHRIST upon earth. And the wonderful change, wrought the same hour upon mystical *Babylon*, by the fall of a third part, and the slaughter of seven thousand, are intended to convey, the beginning of the ruin of both antichristian powers, which are now falling, to rise no more. And hence, the subject is

brought to the end of the sixth trumpet's dispensation: *the second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly!*

But while we pause over the relation, what are the particular improvements we gather from it? No man alive can venture to describe the nature of the calamities the Church will then sustain, just at the close of this *sixth* trumpet. Nay, the very method of the Lord's dealing is hid in mystery; and the death and resurrection of the witnesses, more than of the facts themselves, the Lord hath not revealed. That the time is hastening. That the present state of the Church, and of the world, is under the *sixth* trumpet. That in some recent events, we have seen, and do see, a ripening. These are tokens, in a certain measure and degree, that things are hastening towards the accomplishment. But further we cannot advance. Every thing speaks to the Church of God now, as the Angel did to *Daniel* of old: *But go thy way, till the end be, for thou shalt rest; and stand in thy lot at the end of thy days.* Daniel xii. 13.

15 ¶ And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever,

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

We are now arrived under this seventh trumpet, at that great period all along intended, when all the antichristian powers shall

be totally subdued, and the reign of CHRIST shall take place in the earth. The expectation of this great day of GOD, is in itself enough, properly considered, to bear up the minds of the faithful through all the events yet to be experienced by the Church, under the sixth trumpet, which most evidently is not yet finished. The outward court is not yet given to the *Gentiles*. The two witnesses have not yet finished their testimony. And, from the low estate of the Gospel in the present hour, in relation to vital godliness; very clear it is, that they are still prophesying in sackcloth. Hence, their death hath not taken place. And hence also, their public exposure in the street of the great city, remains to be fulfilled. And from the joy and mirth, all the enemies of vital godliness shall take, in the death of these witnesses, and their gifts they shall send one to another, it is most sure, some great change will take place, before that the sixth trumpet shall have consumed all the purport of his sounding; and the seventh Angel shall usher in his trumpet with joy, to the people of GOD.

Indeed, the overthrow of those antichristian powers, both East and West, which are at present in a flourishing state; and especially the late revival of the western heresy, which for several years past seemed to have been palsied to a great degree; these are no small symptoms, that the slaughter of the witnesses, which evidently must precede the overthrow both of the Mahometan and Papal powers, may be near at hand. The LORD will prepare his people for all events! But it must be a dream indeed, and of the weakest kind, and formed on a baseless fabric, for any man to suppose, that the *seventh* trumpet is coming on, before that the *second* woe is past.

I shall only detain the Reader in this Chapter just to remark, that the whole contents of it, from beginning to end, is to give a brief statement of what may be looked for, under the *sixth* (which is the second woe,) trumpet; and that the *seventh* merely introduceth the time, but doth not enlarge on the blessed events, which will take place under that happy æra. These are brought forward in the after parts of this blessed book of GOD. So vastly important to the mind and pleasure of our adorable LORD JESUS was the object, that his Church should be taught, from age to age, what would arise in the subsequent days, from his return to glory until his coming again to judgment; that he was graciously pleased to shadow forth the outlines of the subject, under a double series of prophecy. Hence the ministry of *seals* and *trumpets*, which we have gone through to the close of this Chapter, have taught the Church the wonderful subject, from the first commencement of the history from CHRIST'S Ascension; until his Descension. And in the next Chapter, the LORD begins the subject again, in another series of prophecy, under the ministry of *Viols*; until the LORD sums up all, in his everlasting kingdom of glory. May the LORD bless to his people, the several Chapters we have gone over, and open to us the several yet remaining to be read; that both may minister to his glory, and our furtherance in grace, by JESUS CHRIST!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED LORD JESUS! thy Church finds cause to praise thee, for thy gracious watching over thy people, and regarding their inte-

rests as thine own. Very sweetly didst thou manifest this love of thine, when commending *John* to measure the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein. Surely, LORD, if *John* was thus taught to know the dimensions of thy Church and people; JESUS meant to say, that he himself knows all that concerns them. The thought of this, is enough, in the worst of times, to comfort thy chosen. True, LORD, thy witnesses are in sackcloth in the present hour. The waters of the sanctuary run low. But *the LORD knoweth them that are his*. In the darkest seasons, JESUS hath a seed to serve him, a generation to call him blessed.

LORD! prepare thy Church for the awful time, when thy witnesses shall be slain. Oh! keep thy Church, in every individual instance of her true members, from the accommodating spirit of the present day. Oh! for grace from thee, thou glorious LORD, to bear up against the torrent running through this land, of mingling *with the heathen, and learning their works*. Carry on thy chosen, through all that remains to be accomplished, under the second woe trumpet of thy counsels. And hasten, in thine own time, that blessed soul-reviving sound, which shall call forth great voices in heaven, and the shouts of thy redeemed upon earth. Though both the Writer, and present Reader of this feeble labor, may not be alive to hail thy coming; yet all thy faithful now in grace, do by faith take part in that glory, which shall then be revealed, when *thou shalt come to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in all them that believe*. Amen.

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with the History of the Church, from the Beginning. Here is represented by Figure, that Church, brought forth, and immediately persecuted. A Dragon stands ready to devour. She is preserved in the Wilderness. To these follow an Account of War in Heaven, with the Consequences.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 ¶ And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and

the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

We cannot hesitate a moment, under divine teaching, to apprehend what was intended from this figurative representation. The prophecy all along relates to the Church. When the Son of God first appeared to *John*, to give him the revelation contained in this book, it was not to tell him of things past ; but to shew to his servant, *things which should be hereafter*. Rev. i. 1. Hence, therefore, the birth of this man child could not be, as some have thought, to represent the birth of CHRIST, for that had long before taken place ; but of the Church. The LORD is here beginning again the same subject as before ; only now, the LORD will make a new representation of the same truths, under a different form. He opens, therefore, with representing Zion bringing forth the Church, which is called a great wonder in heaven. And a wonder indeed, which angels desire to look into. Here is a woman represented, as clothed with the sun. Zion clothed with CHRIST her Husband, the Sun of Righteousness. Having put on CHRIST, made comely in his comeliness, and shining in his robes of salvation. The moon, which represented the earth, under her feet, to intimate, that now clothed with CHRIST, she had risen above all the dying, perishing things here below, and became wholly engaged with the glories of her LORD. And, to shew her coronation with CHRIST her husband, she hath a coronet of twelve stars upon her head. Perhaps an allusion also to the adorning of the head and heart with the bright light of the teaching of the twelve Apostles.

The fruitfulness of the Church is blessedly set forth, under this figure, of her being with child ; for, it is said of Zion, that *as soon as she travailed she brought forth ; before her pains came, she was delivered of a man child !* Isaiah lxvi. 7. Reader ! what a sweet thought ariseth from hence. The travailing pains of the soul, are sure tokens of soul-deliverance. The womb of grace, like the womb of nature, is sure to bring forth souls unto God. For thus graciously speaks the LORD. *Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth ? Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God ?* Isaiah lxvi. 9. And, Reader ! what saith the LORD concerning the register of Zion's children ? Yea, what saith the LORD, concerning Zion's King, as well as his brethren ? *The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man (this God-Man) was born there !* Psalm lxxxvii. 5, 6.

This other wonder, of a great red dragon in heaven, (that is, in the Church, see Chap. xxi. 1, 2, 3.) meaning the devil, and is so called in verse 9. The seven heads, and ten horns, with seven crowns, of this dragon, defines the place, and authority of this beast. And, that we might not err in application, to whom it belongs, we read in the opening of the next Chapter, that the dragon gave his power and his seat to the beast, which arose out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. Now, as all this is figurative of kingdoms, so the description can suit none but *Rome*. For that empire is notoriously known to stand upon seven mountains. The differences of the crowns, in one instance being *seven*, and in the other *ten*, perhaps may be, from three other kingdoms being since added to the empire, Rev. xiii. 1, 2.

The tail of this dragon drawing the third part of the stars after him, implies, (what stars always, when figuratively used in scripture mean, principalities and powers,) that this beast had such influence with certain great ones of the earth, to draw them after him to his devilish policy. So that he got into alliance with him the sovereigns of the earth. And this was eminently manifested, when the Roman empire was heathen. And in the after periods, when professing christianity under the emperor *Constantine*, still the influence of the dragon continued. The devil, by turning christian, found that policy more profitable than even heathenism; for he never more artfully carries on his persecutions against true believers, than when he transforms himself into an *angel of light*. Oh! what multitudes hath his tail drawn after him, from that hour to the present, in persuading men to profess the knowledge and faith of CHRIST, while denying his eternal power and GODHEAD?

I beg the Reader to notice what is said of the Church bringing forth a *man child*, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Let not the Reader suppose, that this meant CHRIST; for CHRIST himself is here shewing his servant *John*, by this figure, the bringing forth of the Church, after his return to glory, and during the period of the Roman government while heathen. The ruling all nations, implied the universal dominion of CHRIST's Church, by virtue of her union with her LORD, as set forth: Psm. ii. So CHRIST promised his Church in his Epistle by *John*, to the Church at *Thyatira*. *He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.* Rev. ii. 26, 27. And such we know will be the event, when the *seventh* Angel shall sound the *seventh* trumpet; for then *the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15. And *we*, saith the Church, *shall reign on the earth.* Rev. v. 10.

Some have thought, that this man child represented the emperor *Constantine*, and that the devil the dragon, stood to devour him as soon as born. I venture to believe not so. I humbly conceive, that the representation means the Church in general, yea, the whole body of CHRIST's mystical members, whom the devil, in every individual instance, alike hates. The empire, by turning christian under *Constantine*, did not a single atom promote the LORD's glory, or the Church's interest. Yea, from the awful heresies, which soon

after began to arise, the devil found occasion to carry on his diabolical purposes with greater advantage: Besides, the representation here made of the Church, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with twelve stars, represents a more glorious state of the Church, than ever was, except in the first ages of the Gospel, when after CHRIST's return to glory, and GOD the HOLY GHOST had visibly come down, the whole body of CHRIST's Church, were of one heart, and of one soul. This was the blessed age of the Church, when living upon CHRIST, professing to be saved wholly in his Person, blood, and righteousness, she might be truly said to be clothed with the sun; and from despising the earthly accommodations, and going about with their lives in their hands, the moon, which represented earthly things, might be said to be under their feet; and the words of the Apostles, and doctrines, as stars, crowning their whole lives and conversation. The LORD, therefore, in beginning the subject again, takes it up from this part, and is describing the history of his Church from *John's* time downward, the better perhaps to prepare the Apostle's mind for the events which were hereafter to follow.

The child being caught up, as soon as it was born, unto GOD, and to his throne, cannot be supposed to mean, taking the Church to heaven immediately on the birth; but rather, it is a beautiful confirmation of that blessed doctrine of grace, that at the new-birth of every child of GOD, the LORD's people are made *partakers of the divine nature, and have all things given them that pertain to life and godliness*. GOD undertakes for them. And the GOD of all grace, *who hath called them unto his eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS, after they have suffered awhile, will perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them.* 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. 1 Pet. v. 10.

The wilderness, into which the woman, immediately on delivery, is said to have fled, is a further proof of the observation just made. The wilderness is this world, where, under wilderness dispensation, the Church is placed, during her time-state, from grace to glory. And hence the Church, in the Songs is represented, as *coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon CHRIST her beloved*. For no sooner is the LORD JESUS CHRIST known by the child of GOD, at the new-birth, or regeneration, than every thing here, becomes a wilderness, out of CHRIST. The LORD's appointing the Church's feeding in the wilderness, hath a reference to that sweet, but secret mercy, by which, even in times of famine, the LORD gives his chosen ones the bread of life, and the hidden manna, which none knoweth, saving him that receiveth. Say, ye hidden ones of my GOD, is it not so now? And will it not be so for ever, till the LORD, who now feeds, in *secret*, will come to make known his people *openly*. Let the Reader observe what is said here, of *the thousand two hundred and threescore days*. Though no man hath ever yet been able to count those days, neither hath any man been as yet informed of GOD, when the date of them commenced, nor when they shall end; yet the Church, as is here said, is to be fed the whole time; while the LORD's servants, his two witnesses, are to prophecy in sackcloth; and as long as the persecution of the Eastern, and Western, and all other heresies, shall remain. Reader! think what a sweet assurance this is! Look at this sixth verse again. In this wilderness, GOD himself hath prepared a table

for his Church. And observe, it is said, that they should feed her there the whole period of years. Who are they that are to feed her? Surely God himself in his threefold character of Persons, will feed his people. His servants, the faithful ministers of his word and ordinances, shall feed her: yea, rather than his Church shall want bread, God will feed her from his very enemies' table. Our God saith now, as He said of old, when his Israel was in a strait: *Moab! saith God, let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; and be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.* Isaiah xvi. 4. As if the LORD had said, Moab! thou art a bitter foe to my Israel, and thou wouldest gladly sweep them off from the face of the earth: But I will overrule thee, as I did *Balaam*, to bless my people, when he would, at thy instance, have *cursed* them. Numb. xxii. 6. Feed my outcasts; for though they are outcasts, they are *my* outcasts: house them, therefore, and take care of them, till I take them home, from all their wilderness straits and difficulties. Reader! do you know any thing of this in your *own* history? Oh! it is sweet, it is precious, so to do. A child of God finds even straits and difficulties blessed, when thereby it affords opportunity for the LORD's display of grace. These things make the wilderness, and the solitary place, and the desert, to rejoice and blossom, as the rose. Isaiah xxxv. 1.

I said just now, that concerning the period of those *twelve hundred and sixty days*, no man hath ever yet been able to count them, neither hath any man as yet been informed of God, when the date of them commenced, or when they shall end. And I beg very humbly of the Reader, to be on his guard against all the proud presumptuous publications of unenlightened carnal men on the subject, who have attempted and do attempt it. If, from the time of *Daniel's* prophecy concerning those days, (see Dan. xii. 11.) to the present hour, our God hath not thought proper to inform one of his redeemed servants, can it be supposed that the secret will be made known to men, who, though professing Christianity, know nothing more of it than in the name? There is somewhat very awful in my view, in the publications of such characters. But while I shudder at their presumption I am much more astonished that any of God's dear children should be led away by them, to place any confidence in their calculations, untaught of God as they most evidently are. The word of God saith, that *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*. But we never read that the LORD unfolds, what for wise and gracious purposes, he for a time withholds from his people, to make known to his enemies. Very sure I am, that in the general, the LORD doth not lay open his prophecies further, than to deliver his predictions, and it is the province of his redeemed, to be found in humble waitings for their accomplishments. And when any of his own would say as the Prophet did, *O my LORD, what shall be the end of these things?* the answer can hardly be expected more gracious, than was given to the man greatly beloved. *Go thy way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.* Dan. xii. 8, 9.

7 ¶ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and *ye* that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Let the Reader keep in remembrance, that, for the most part, when heaven is spoken of in this book of God is meant the Church. Indeed, it can hardly be necessary to observe, that when it is said there was war in heaven, it could not be supposed is meant, that blessed place, where God dwells, where all is peace, and holiness, and joy. But, the war here mentioned, was, and still is in the Church. *Michael* by whom is meant *CHRIST*, is opposed by *Satan*, and the conflict must be as is here stated, in the ultimate termination. But during the contest God's dear children, though sure of victory, have many an hard skirmish to sustain from day to day, neither doth the faithful soldier in *CHRIST*'s army, unbuckle his armor, until the *LORD* undresseth him for the grave.

But if we consider what is here said, with an especial eye to the Church, at the period *CHRIST* had in view, when instructing his servant *John*, and this also, as leading on by a spirit of prophecy, to the great events then to take place in his Church; and from thence to the end of all things, we must call to remembrance, that this was the period of the Church, after *CHRIST*'s return to glory, and under the time of the Empire being heathen, to the time when the Empire professed Christianity, including a space of about three hundred years. And this brings down the history in this Chapter, to the time of the *Arian* heresy.

So wonderful an event, as that of an whole Empire becoming Christian, (that is *professing* Christianity, and, no doubt, though mul-

attitudes under that character were no other than summer flies basking in the sun-shine of prosperity, yet many of God's dear children being now no longer terrified with the threats and persecutions of their pagan neighbors, were enabled to boast aloud in the God of their salvation,) might well be supposed to celebrate the Lord's glory in the change. Hence, the loud voice *John* in vision heard in heaven, that is in the Church; *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his CHRIST.* And let the Reader observe no less, how the faithful as with one voice, attributed all their victory to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. So is it now, and so must it be for ever, during the whole time-state of the Church upon earth. No victory, but in and by CHRIST. No washing from sin, but in his blood. No righteousness but his, to justify before God!

And well may the Church rejoice, while the devil grows more and more angry, in the consciousness of the shortness of his triumphs over the Church. For what is the whole of his reign, from the fall of *Adam*, to the time of his being cast into hell for ever. What is six thousand years to eternity? It is no more than a single grain of sand, compared to the globe! I have often thought, if a child of God could but keep this always in remembrance, every exercise would be as nothing. Day by day lessens all our sorrows. The one of yesterday is gone to be numbered with the years beyond the flood, never more to return. Like boys at school we may cut off the daily notch, which makes the number to the holidays. Shortly, the last will come to be cut off, and then the child of God, hears the chariot wheels of JESUS come to take him home to his FATHER'S house.

While, on the contrary, I have as often thought, how short-lived, the triumphs or the pleasures of the ungodly! How must the man of earth, I mean the christless sinner, ingulphed like *Korah* and his company in earthly concerns, begrudge every day that passeth. Each night he might say, as the knell of day tolls for its funeral, there's another day gone of my comforts upon earth, and when the last comes, where am I departing? Hence, it is the world dreads to be told of their age, because they dread to die. Reader! with which class are you standing? If new born in CHRIST, (for that is the only real standard of character,) look out, with holy confidence and joy, for the chariot wheels of JESUS! If unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed in soul, death cannot but be dreadful!

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water

as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

At this verse, if I am correct, may be dated the rise of heresy in the *professing* Church, after the Empire became what is called Christian. When the dragon found, that the Emperor and his court acknowledged Christianity, and the idols had tottered and fallen, being cast out of the palace and city, as an *unclean* devil, he thought it best to come in a *clean* devil. Hence, he himself in his angels or messengers professed Christianity. But, by a master-piece of subtlety, he took up the profession of a new faith, and robbed CHRIST of his GODHEAD. To use the words of our LORD, as long as he had been the strong man armed, and the Empire continued sunk in the darkness of paganism and idolatry, his goods and his captives were at peace. But, when the stronger than he came upon him, and overcame him, his armor of idolatry was over. Hence, he saith I will return into my house, (still *his* house, in every instance where there is no change of heart by regeneration,) from whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept, and garnished of all the idols he had once set up there. But now returning with all the various heresies, the human mind untaught of God is capable of receiving, he enters in and dwells there, and *the last state of that man is worse than the first.* Matt. xii. 43—45.

The flight of the Church into the wilderness, from the persecution raised against her in the city, is a striking but just figure of those wilderness exercises, the LORD's people sustain under persecution. To every child of God, truly regenerated by the SPIRIT of God, and who from that regeneration and teaching of the HOLY GHOST, knows CHRIST in his GODHEAD, and Person, and offices, and character, the present day is a wilderness day, into which the soul is brought. He cannot but find wilderness dispensation, while he hears the blasphemy. Hence, like *David*, his language is, *Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy laws,* (CHRIST.) Psm. cxix. 136.

The serpent casting out of his mouth water, as a flood after the Church, very plainly means to shew, the flood of heresy, which the devil about this time raised up in the Church. Not the heresy of *Popery* or *Mahometanism*, for neither of those Anti-christian powers were as yet in being. But the flood of heresy was that of *Arius*, who denied the GODHEAD of CHRIST. And another famous, or rather infamous heretic by this time had appeared, *Pelagius*, who denied original sin, and by insisting upon man's purity by nature, and an holiness of will to obey God, he totally set aside among all

his followers, the necessity of redemption by CHRIST's blood. There were also the *Nestorian* heresy, and the *Macedonian* at this time, and followed not by a few. The former divided the Person of CHRIST, and the latter would admit neither of the Person nor GOD-HEAD of the HOLY GHOST. These were among the great torrents of schism, with which the Church of CHRIST was then beset, beside some lesser sweeping streams, to annoy her in the purity of her worship.

By the earth helping the woman, just as an opening made in the earth, comes seasonably to swallow up a flood, is probably meant, that men of no religion, displeased with the cruelties exercised upon the real godly, in those times (of which profane history is full with the account,) put a stop at them, not unfrequently. The providence of God so over-ruled things, that when *the wrath of man*, instigated by the devil, was very great, the LORD made it to praise him, by inducing the very reverse the enemy intended. And when that wrath was more than ministered ultimately to the LORD's glory, *the LORD restrained it*. Psm. lxxvi. 10. Oh! how often may the people of God set their seal to this great truth. Very frequently their enemies are led by the LORD, to do the very reverse of what they design, and become the unconscious ministers of producing good, where they intend evil. When the Jews crucified JESUS, what did they design? In CHRIST's death, what did they accomplish? When hell pursued the Church with error, what was the object? But from those heresies the devil stirred up, God's taught children, through the LORD's teaching, have learnt the greater blessedness and preciousness of the truth. Oh! the depths of divine wisdom! Oh! the unsearchableness of divine love!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! if the Church appeared as a great wonder in heaven, when beheld clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars, shall not you and I wonder as we behold her also? Oh! what a lovely sight is the Church, the spouse of JESUS! And what a wonder, that the SON of GOD should choose for himself such an one, when all the Angels of GOD were at his command! Yea, Reader! what a greater wonder still, if so be you and I are of CHRIST's members, in this mystical body! A child of GOD is the wonder of heaven, the wonder of angels! and oh! how much more a wonder to himself, that while meriting hell, he should be preserved for heaven.

And, Reader! let us look also to the other wonder in heaven, and behold this great red dragon. Let us look at him without fear, while looking to, and depending upon JESUS for help. JESUS hath conquered him for us, and in us; and we know, that *the GOD of peace, will bruise Satan under our feet shortly*. Oh! what a world of wonders are we in, that the worm *Jacob* shall thresh the mountains! But, Reader! never lose sight in whose strength it is, we are made strong. The armies of heaven, overcome by the blood of the LAMB. Yes! there can be salvation in no other. No other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!

LORD JESUS! cause the earth to help the woman, thy Church, now in the flood of heresies, the Serpent hath belched out of his mouth with a view to destroy her, in this present sinful and spiritual adulterous generation. And while hell in such numberless directions, is making war with the true remnant of thy seed, oh! for the LORD to give that seed to see that more is with us, than all that are against us. Remember, precious JESUS, thine own gracious words, and make them particularly sweet and refreshing to thine own, in the present day of rebuke and blasphemy: *My seed* (thou hast said) *shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness, unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is introduced with an Account of a Beast arising from the Sea, to whom the Dragon gives his Power. Another Beast cometh also at the same Time upon the Earth. This latter causeth the Earth to worship the Image of the former, and to receive his Mark.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy

against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Here, if I mistake not, begins the first of *Popery* and *Mahometanism*. And, if I am correct, this Chapter, in point of time, corresponds to the *ninth* Chapter of this blessed Book, which opens with the sounding of the *fifth* trumpet. Four hundred years or thereabout, had run out while the Empire was *heathen*. One hundred more or thereabout, under the *professing* Church of Christianity, when the heresies of *Arius* and *Pelagius*, had arisen to harass the LORD's people. And now the heresies of Popery and Mahometanism come forward to commence their horrible war, against the true faith *as it is in* JESUS. And these have both extended their powers, the one East, and the other West, (except in a few instances,) to the present hour, and so will continue during the whole of the *sixth* trumpet's dispensation, and that woe is past. By comparing those scriptures together, the Reader will be best enabled through grace, to behold the correspondence in the history, and what is yet more, will therefrom learn also, somewhat of the grace and tenderness of CHRIST, in giving his Church through *John* a beautiful and most interesting duplicate of what they are so highly concerned to know, of those heresies which have distressed the Church, their beginning, progress, and sure destruction. In this Chapter we have only the features of the former.

Under the similitude of a beast rising up out of the sea, *John* is taught of a new power, coming forth to the persecution of the Church. This beast cannot be the Dragon before mentioned, because in the second verse of this Chapter, the Dragon, that is the devil, is said to *give him his power*. Therefore it will follow by an undeniable conclusion, that if the dragon which *John* saw before, in the *twelfth* Chapter, was the devil, and there so expressly said to be, (see Chap. xii. 3. with 9.) and this same dragon in this Chapter, is said to have given his power to this beast, *John* here saw coming up out of the sea, it must follow that this beast, be who or what he may, hath

derived all his power and authority from hell. Laying this down as a proof which no one can deny, it will be our next grand concern, who this beast represents, and what he is.

The *first* account given of him, is of *his strength and power*. He is said to have seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and blasphemy upon all. That *Rome* is the seat of this beast's empire, there can be no question. Here it was, that all the great transactions of the Church were carried on. In consequence of its extensive empire at the time that these prophecies were given, it was called the world. Rom. i. 7, 8. Moreover, in further confirmation, it is remarkable, that the city itself stood upon seven mountains or hills, and is said to have had, under the jurisdiction of the empire, seven kingdoms. Hence those heads and crowns. Perhaps in the further extent, the ten crowns implied, that three other kingdoms had been added since the Empire ceased to be heathen, and when overrun by two nations which arose after, namely, the *Goths* and *Vandals*.

The *second* feature which this Chapter noticeth of this beast, is, that the dragon, that is the devil, gave him *his power and his seat, and great authority*. Nothing can more strongly define a thing, than what is here done. The devil could give no authority to this beast, but for devilish purposes. And as the last account we had of the devil in the preceding Chapter was, that he was wrath, and went to make war with the remnant of the seed of the Church, and here in this scripture which immediately follows, we find him giving his power, and his seat, and his great authority, to this beast, it must have been as an Antichristian heresy, to afflict and make war with the true Church of God. This statement must also be allowed as correct.

Thirdly. John saw *one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and yet this deadly wound was healed*. Perhaps this alludes to the destruction of the empire, after it became Christian by profession. For it was mouldered away and divided. Therefore, in point of temporal power, *Rome* was lessened, before that this beast came to the government of it. And this might be intended, by the figure of a *deadly wound*. But now by the great power given to the beast by the dragon, this deadly wound was healed, and *all the world wondered after the beast*; namely, that if the great Emperors gone before had not been able to keep their authority, what a wonderful power must this be, upheld by the dragon, to exercise such authority.

Fourthly. Let the Reader duly observe the bottom of this business. The great object of the whole is to worship the dragon. Yes! the beast, be whoever he may, is only made the tool of this whole concern. It is the devil that is to be worshipped, not the beast. Oh! could the fool, whether it be the Pope or any of his Cardinals, that is here meant by the beast, but see what a tool he is made in this trumpery of shew, how would he revolt at the impudence of the dragon upon the occasion.

Fifthly. Observe, that upon the heads of this beast was *the name of blasphemy*. And blasphemy indeed it must be, in the whole of this concern, which begins as we have seen with the devil, in giving his power, and his seat, and his great authority to the beast, and

ends, as we read Chapter xix. and 20th verse, in the beast being taken, and with him the false prophet, and both being cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Sixthly. And it is said, that *there was given unto him, a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.* Yes. This is the bait by which the dragon, the devil, catches the world of the ungodly, both Popes and Prelates, men of titles, and the rich of the earth. When this devil, this dragon tempted *Job*, he stripped him and made him poor. The devil is grown wiser since. He was foiled *then*, for *Job* belonged not to him, and he could not prevail. He useth a more sure plan *now*. He does all by them that are his, as he did by this beast. He gives his power to him, and his seat, and his authority. He gives his followers these rattles, which, like children, shall amuse and lull them on. And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. But when the *forty and two months are over*, the mask falls off, and their eternal destruction is come.

Seventhly. The dragon is not satisfied with the ruin of this beast only, he must have all his followers. Hence, therefore, it is said, that they not only worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, but they worshipped the beast also, saying, *who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* Hence we see, that the beast himself shall not only commit blasphemy, and open his mouth to blaspheme God, but his followers shall even take the words of God's children, and which can only be applied to God, when they say, as is upon record, *who is a God like unto thee, O LORD, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.* *Exod. xv. 11.* And these wretched men, shall dare to use similar language in their addresses to the beast; *who is like unto the beast, who can make war with him.*

Eighthly. Awful to relate, and as a close for the present to this awful account, it is added, that *all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world.* Hence the power of this beast, and the dragon which hath given for a time his power to him, is much more extensive than is generally supposed. There is no preservative, but in the electing grace of God. Blessed be God! they are secured, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. Neither beast nor dragon, neither Pope nor devil can touch them. But without this, all the world shall wonder after the beast, and all worship him. Reader! ponder well the account; and beg of God to give you a right understanding in all things.

11 ¶ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12* And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he

maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14 ¶ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 ¶ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.

Various have been the opinions of men, on the subject of this other beast. Some have contended, from the term *other* beast, that notwithstanding this agrees with the former in sentiment and in conduct, yet it cannot be the same. And, no doubt, in the first view of the subject, it should seem to be another character. Nevertheless, it hath been as strongly asserted by others, that it is but one and the same, the former intimating a *temporal* power, and the latter an *ecclesiastical* government; and that both must describe, for the characters can belong to no other than the *Pope of Rome*. I leave the Reader, however, to form his own opinion, under the grace of God.

It will be our best improvement, in order to a clear apprehension of the subject, to attend to the particular features of character, by which this beast is described.

First. He is spoken of as a lamb with two horns, probably to intimate his affecting the character of religion, and that of CHRIST the Lamb of God. If this be, as is generally supposed, the representation of the Pope, in his papal office, there can be no difficulty in explaining what is here said, in reference to that character. For as the Pope, CHRIST's vicar, as he blasphemously calls himself, and head of the Church, *Peter's* successor, and the like, and agree-

ably to those assumed titles, he utters great swelling words, and speaks as a dragon, this name of lamb, surrounded as he is with his cardinals, bishops, abbots, and priests, is just as suited to him, under this *ecclesiastical* power which the dragon hath given to him, as the other is considered in his *temporal* pomp, as a prince and sovereign. He and his cardinals, both *ecclesiastical* and *temporal* lords. A pretty groupe!

Secondly. His exercising the same power as the beast before him, seems to imply an identity of person, and that it is one and the same, and the place of government is the same, which could not well be, if it were not so. And, as he is said to enforce the worship of the first beast, it should moreover seem to point to those *Anathemas*, bulls, excommunications, and the like, by which the papal authority is known. On this ground, there doth not appear much difficulty of apprehension.

Thirdly. His deception of them that dwell on the earth, by miracles, or rather pretended miracles, is yet an higher proof still. For no power but the Pontiff, ever assumed the character of working miracles, or rather, palming off upon the common people, the tale of lying wonders. This is so striking a feature of Popery, that it belongs to no other. And to read an account of what some Popes have been said to do this way, is one of the most impudent attempts the world ever had palmed off upon them, excepting indeed, the counterpart of the same, in the *Hegira* of *Mahomet*.

Fourthly. And to crown all. The mark of the beast, in the right hand or forehead of the people, is the finishing account of this awful beast. And to what extent, in what numbers, to how many persons the awful delusion hath reached, who shall calculate or say? Most distressing is it to consider, that, from the ignorance of the common people, and the craft of the higher, in the support of a system, that upon principles of human policy, hath been found the best state-contrivance, to keep the lower order in subjection, multitudes have received the mark, and worshipped the beast. Indeed, the prohibition of trade and employment without the mark, is such in popish countries, that the practice is universal. And still, if possible, more awful to relate, concerning those who profess to know better and to be above such foolish notions, it is to be feared that the numbers are not few, who receive the mark in the moment they deride it, the better to carry on the secular, or ecclesiastical purpose of the world! Such are among the awful deceptions of this heresy.

I forbear to offer a single observation on the number of the beast, *six hundred, three score and six*. Much hath been said and written upon it, by carnal men. Few, I believe, of those taught of God, have ventured to give their opinion upon it. The HOLY GHOST saith, *here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast*. But it would be well to remember that it is him, that *hath understanding*, none beside. And where the LORD giveth not understanding, the wisest will only stumble at the very threshold of enquiry. I retire from it with diffidence. The LORD in his own time will explain. And here I leave the subject.

REFLECTIONS.

In reading this Chapter, well may the child of God cry out with the Apostle, how doth *the mystery of iniquity already work!* What an awful account is here, of him *whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders!* And how hath the LORD, for this cause given the ungodly up, and sent them *strong delusions, that they should believe a lie!*

Can the imagination conceive any view of the dark and ignorant state of the human mind, as great in point of self deception, as is here stated? That men should be brought to worship the beast, and with him the devil, to hear his blasphemy, to receive his mark, and to call him by names which belong to none but God. And that this delusion should descend from father to son, in a regular succession, from one age to another; no man being able to deliver his soul and say, *is there not a lie in my right hand?*

Blessed LORD JESUS! be thou adored, and loved, and praised, and delighted, in that thou hast kept thy people, and secured them from the possibility of worshipping the beast, for thou hast marked all their names in thy book of life. Oh! the blessedness of electing, preserving, redeeming, regenerating grace! LORD! do thou keep my soul in the hour, and from the power of temptation that is coming on the earth! LORD! give me to see the sure cause of rejoicing, in that *my name is written in thy book of life.*

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

We have here a most beautiful View of CHRIST, as a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, his Church, and with him a blessed Company of his Redeemed. An Angel is seen flying in the Midst of Heaven. Another is heard, declaring the Fall of Babylon. Here is the Harvest of the Earth, and the Vintage, and Wine Press of the Wrath of God.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

This Chapter opens, with presenting a most interesting view to the Apostle's mind, to relieve him from the awful scenes he had in the preceding Chapter been exercised with. The reign of Antichrist for the long period of twelve hundred and sixty days, or prophetic years, could not fail of having much depressed *John's* spirits. The LORD, therefore, here gives him a most lovely prospect of the Church. He looked, and beheld the same Lamb which had so often been seen by him in those visions, and now saw standing on Mount *Zion*, his Church; and encircled with his sealed ones, having his FATHER's name in their foreheads. There were many sweet mercies included in this view. As *first*, JESUS still appeared to the Apostle, in his personal glory as the Lamb, as if to intimate the everlasting sameness of his Mediator-character, and the everlasting efficacy of his blood and righteousness. No time, no, nor eternity itself, can make any alteration in JESUS, as JESUS. For although, when all the great purposes of CHRIST's mediation in the kingdom of grace shall be accomplished, and the last elect child of God is brought home to the LORD, the LORD JESUS it is said, will deliver up the kingdom to God the FATHER, that the whole persons of the GODHEAD may be glorified together, in the accomplishment of their Covenant of grace, yet, the Person of CHRIST as God-Man, will eternally remain. No period will ever arrive, wherein CHRIST shall cease to be CHRIST; that is, God and Man in one Person. JESUS is, and must be the LAMB for ever. Yea, and all the communications of glory, will be to all eternity *in Him*, and *by Him*, and *through Him*. For he is then, at much as now, the *Head of his body the Church, the fullness of Him, which filleth all in all*. Ephes. i. 22, 23. Hence, the very great blessedness here manifested to *John*, and to the Church through *John*, that CHRIST appeared to him, *as the Lamb on Mount Zion*.

Secondly. The place of manifestation was also gracious, and no doubt intended to teach both *John* and the Church, a most sweet and precious lesson. Mount *Zion* is CHRIST's Church, of whom it is said, *the LORD hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This (he saith) is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it*. Psm. cxxxii. 13, 14. Here it is, JESUS plants his Church. Here, the king is held in the galleries of his ordinances. His presence is *Zion's* glory, her strength, her security. And this was most blessedly shewn, upon the present occasion to *John*, because the long reign of Antichrist, in the beast and dragon, with all their persecutions, that the Church laying open to such foes, might be taught *Zion's* king was still in her, watching over her night and day, and watering her every moment. Nothing could be more gracious and

timely, than this vision of CHRIST, and of the spot where the Lamb stood. It was in exact correspondence to that scripture, *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, lo! I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.* Zech. ii. 5—10.

Thirdly. There is also a very striking beauty in this scripture, that the number of an hundred and forty and four thousand are mentioned, being the very same number whom *John* had in a former vision seen, as sealed by CHRIST. (See Chap. vii. 2.) So that here was shewn, that notwithstanding all the long and wearisome persecutions, not one of them was lost. And moreover, the name of their FATHER, beheld by *John* in their foreheads, became as plain a proof, that they had made an open profession before men, whose they were, and to whom they belonged, in direct defiance to them, who had the mark of the beast. Chap. xiii. 16, 17. Oh! how blessed is it, when the LORD gives grace, in the present hour, to his tried ones, that none of the privileges, of buying, or selling the world's traffic, can induce the LORD's people to worship the beast, or to receive his horrible name in their foreheads.

Fourthly. The mercy of this vision, in seeing Jesus with his redeemed, was intended by way of relief at this time, because the opposition of hell, with the two Antichristian powers, of the East, and the West, were to increase to a still greater degree, in proportion as the time hastened on, for their destruction. It is well known of the serpent of the earth, that he never stretches himself so long as when dying. And the serpent of hell, we are told, is come down with great wrath, *because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* Rev. xii. 12. The last bite of the beast, will be the deepest. How very sweet and gracious was it therefore in the LORD, when about to shew his servant *John* the yet more violent persecutions coming on from the malice of hell and his auxiliaries, to show him here, that CHRIST was in his Church, and every one of his little ones protected by him, and in everlasting safety.

Fifthly. But the mercy shewn *John* in this representation, and to the Church through him, was extended further. For, in addition to what he saw, he heard also a voice from heaven, (that is, from the Church,) as the voice of many waters, and as thunder, intimating the multitude, probably the same multitude as *John* saw, Chap. vii. 9, chaunting aloud the song of redemption; no doubt the same as *John* heard before, the words of which he hath given us. Chap. v. 9. And, I beg the Reader to notice with peculiar regard, that none could learn the song but the redeemed. What can be more decisive in proof of the sovereignty of grace? In the Church upon earth there are none that truly and spiritually join ordinances, participate in their saving grace, in spirit and in understanding, taste and relish divine things, but the people of God. For how can a dead body partake of food? How can a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, until quickened into spiritual life, partake of the bread of life? And equally so in the Church of heaven, none could ever sing or learn the song of redemption, unless redeemed from the earth. Some men dream of heaven as if it was a place that in itself must be productive of happiness. And hence they think, that if they can

but get there among the croud, they know not how, and I had almost said they care not how; they should be as happy as the rest. Alas! it is not the *place* which constitutes happiness, but the *presence* of the LORD. Where CHRIST is, and in the soul where CHRIST dwells, there is life and joy eternal. But without this saving change wrought on the soul of a sinner by regeneration, heaven, if it were possible to attain it, (and which is impossible by all that are not born again, John iii. 5.) would produce no happiness; but, on the contrary, misery. For the unrenewed man would be for ever wretched, in hearing this song of redemption, without being able to join in a single note of it, to all eternity.

Sixthly. The features of character given to the LORD's army, come in with much sweetness, to close the account of this vision. And this is by no means the smallest part of the beauty of it. Under the figure of chastity, their attachment to CHRIST is shewn. They are said, *not to have defiled themselves with women*. By which, in a general way of expression, is evidently meant to contrast the LORD's followers from the followers of the beast. The kings of the earth, and all the nations, are said to have committed fornication, and to have been made drunken with the wine of the beast. Chap. xviii. 3. But the LORD's redeemed are described by their chastity to CHRIST, and as the followers of the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. Their mouth without guile, and their being without fault before the throne, cannot be supposed to imply any purity in themselves, for in the similar representation *John* saw, they are said to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the LAMB. See Chap. vii. 14. But it is CHRIST's righteousness which is the purity of his people, and their robes of salvation in which they appear before the throne, their royal dress. He hath made them kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER; and therefore, this is the sole account wherefore they stand before his throne and serve him in his temple night and day.

Reader! ponder well this sweet and gracious vision. Think how blessedly the LORD termed it. How full and expressive of his love; not only to *John*, but to the Church, both then and now. And remember, that it is always the same. By faith you and I may see the Lamb still on Mount Zion, and all his redeemed surrounding him. And, oh! for grace, to sing the song of redemption now; for surely then, we shall sing it one day with the whole Church in glory!

6 ¶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

We have here a beautiful description of the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. I do not presume to speak decidedly, on any pas-

sage in the word of God, which may be considered of doubtful signification; much less, on such, as in this book, which are in any degree mysterious. But I would humbly ask, whether, in what is here said, that it is the *everlasting* Gospel, the Angel, is here said to have been seen by *John* flying in the midst of heaven (that is, the Church,) to preach is not intended, the everlasting preaching of it, in all ages of the Church, against all the heresies which arise? The angel here seen, cannot be supposed to be any one individual person, or messenger, but the representative of all faithful ministers. By the Gospel preached, can mean no other than CHRIST himself, who is the sum and substance of all, and the full finished salvation by him, such as was preached by the Apostles, after the descent of the HOLY GHOST. See Acts v. 42. Reader! what a relation is here at once given of the Gospel? What an importance is annexed to it, in that the LORD's people shall have it preached to them, in whatever nation, kindred, tongue, or people, they shall be? So the LORD hath provided; and so will he accomplish his purpose. Oh! how eternally safe and secure are the redeemed of the LORD. Isaiah xxvii. 13.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Here is the second Embassy, and reaching to a period still further remote, looking indeed into those times, when the heresy of the West, under the Pope, should begin to give way. I do not presume to ascertain the period; but I find some have, and fixed it to about the opening of the *fifteenth* century. The fall of mystical *Babylon*, meaning *Rome*, began much about this time. The LORD raised up certain characters from among her own communion, which began to call her authority in question.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Within these verses we have the awful denunciation against those who worship the beast, and receive his mark. And, what I admire particularly in this account is, the striking contrast, between the LORD's people and the ungodly. While the one is under the awful condemnation of everlasting punishment; the other is said to possess the patience of the saints, in waiting on the LORD.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

I would desire permission to consider this verse by itself, for the blessedness and sweetness of it. I do not say but that it might be supposed to have an immediate reference to that age in which it was written. But I do say, that the general, yea, the universal consolations of it, are such, as to suit all ages of the Church of God. Every where, and upon all occasions, it must be allowed, that the dead are blessed dead, which die in the LORD. And *John*, being commanded by a voice to write it down, evidently shews, that God the HOLY GHOST will have the Church to know their blessedness in this particular. A few of the more striking features will prove it.

As *first*. The blessed dead, which die in the LORD, die in union with CHRIST. They are, in fact, part of himself; members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. And, in the sight of God, to all intents and purposes, they are one. For as CHRIST is the head of his body the Church, where the head is, the members must be; so that though dying out of time, they still live to him in eternity. And this is what the Apostle said: *For whether we live, we live unto the LORD; or whether we die, we die unto the LORD: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the LORD's.* Rom. xiv. 8.

Secondly. The dead are blessed, which die in the LORD, from henceforth: because, from the moment of their death, and from henceforth, they are got out of the gun-shot of the enemy. No heresy, no powers of darkness, neither men nor devils, can any more annoy them. Oh! the blessedness of being freed from the malice of the world, and from the powers of darkness. *Satan* cannot any more for ever, throw his fiery darts, to distress the child of God. Even if this had been all, it would have been sweet, to have heard the voice from heaven, saying, *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD.*

Thirdly. They are blessed which die in the LORD, because their own body of sin shall no more distress them. No further sorrows shall arise from the out-breakings of sin, or the indwellings of corruption. No tears shall fall any more from pain. No anguish from heart-distresses. They rest from their labors, and sorrow and sighing are done away.

And, *lastly*, to mention no more. Dying in the LORD, they rest in the LORD, their spirits are with the LORD. Hence they are blessed in

the LORD. *Their works follow them.* What works? Not good works, for they have none. LORD! saith the Prophet, *thou hast wrought all our works in us!* Isaiah xxvi. 12. Not their *bad* works, for the LORD hath *washed away all their sins in his blood.* I John i. 7. What works then are these, which are said to follow the blessed dead? Perhaps their works and labor of love, in seeing the fruit of their prayers answered in the Church's prosperity. The cries of the soul awakened by grace, and therefore the LORD's work in them, answered in mercy, when meeting before the throne the redeemed of the LORD brought home, like themselves, by the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple, which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 ¶ And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

There can be no question who this Person was *John* saw on the white cloud. His name, Son of Man, defines his Person and character. And indeed, *John*, at the opening of this vision, had so seen him before. See Chapter i. 13. And his is the office to reap the fruits of his redemption. And the other angel that came out of the temple crying to the LORD JESUS, though no other than a minister-

ing servant, is not to be supposed to be *commanding*, but only *calling* to him. Angels are longing for the period of the Redeemer's glory. And these are said, therefore, to be waiting for Jesus to send them into his harvest, to gather souls. Matt. xiii. 36, &c. But the allusions here made, both to reaping, and vintage, are so much one and the same, in reference to CHRIST's gathering his people, that there can need nothing by way of illustration upon the subject. Instead, therefore, of offering any observations upon what is already so very plain as to need none, I shall rather beg the Reader to attend with me to one or two views, both of this reaping and vintage of Jesus, which are the immediate and sure result of his seed time, in grace; and his redemption-work, in shedding his blood, without the city.

In the *first* place, the thrusting in CHRIST's sickle, to the reaping of his harvest, is secured by every assurance of Covenant-faithfulness; because grace given in the seed-time to his people, is an earnest of glory. It is not said, in the scriptures of eternal truth, that the LORD hath called us merely unto grace, but unto eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS. Grace is the earnest of glory. *He will give grace and glory.* 1 Peter v. 10. 2 Cor. v. 4. Psm. lxxxiv. 11.

Secondly. It is not indeed sufficient to say, that grace leads to glory; for grace is glory begun. Grace, like the bud, which contains all the foliage of the future flower, hath in its bosom, all the openings to glory, in CHRIST JESUS. For what comes *from* CHRIST, leads *to* CHRIST. And as by grace, we are made partakers of the divine nature; so the interest we have in CHRIST, must infallibly secure glory from CHRIST. Jesus himself hath said, *because I live, ye shall live also.* John xiv. 19.

Thirdly. CHRIST's harvest is secured, because it is not liable to be blighted by winds, or storms, or drought, or any other adverse circumstances, which arise. The issue is doubtful. He that hath called his people with an holy calling, hath guarded against all possibilities of peradventures. Difficulties are for men, not for God. Jesus himself watches over his people, and his harvest; and it is impossible that it shall fail. And the more discouragements which appear to us, the more opportunity is afforded for the manifestation of his grace. Jesus will perfect his strength, in our weakness; and the end will prove, that the whole is his work, as the whole is his glory.

And, *lastly*, to mention no more. What endears the whole process to the child of God, and shews that from beginning to end it is all grace, is that (to use the figure of harvest and vintage here adopted,) when to our view all seems blighted, and the whole appears, again and again, in withering circumstances; yet to Him that looks, he sees a blessing in it, when we can see none; and the LORD at length brightens up his own heritage, and makes the whole smile, and blossom, and bring forth abundantly. Reader! it is blessed to feel and know our own nothingness, and CHRIST's all-sufficiency; that in conscious sense, we can bring forth nothing, but as the LORD JESUS disposeth by his grace, we may daily refer all unto Him, and sweetly hear his voice, when he saith: *From me is thy fruit found.* Hosea xiv. 8.

LAMB of GOD! give me to behold thee with the eye of faith, as *John* saw thee in vision, encircled with thine holy army, made holy in thy holiness, and sealed with the FATHER's name written in their foreheads. Oh! the blessedness of being thus acknowledged by the FATHER, supported by the SON, and sealed with the HOLY GHOST.

LORD! do thou still in those awful times, give to thy servants grace to behold thee standing on Mount *Zion*. Do thou manifest, LORD, thy love to her, in being in her; and thine affections for her, in defending her. Let thy faithful know, and let thine enemies feel, that *Jesus* is King in *Zion*, whom GOD the FATHER hath set there. Yea! LORD cause every knee to bow before thee, and every tongue to confess, that *Jesus Christ* is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER!

Precious *Jesus*! let thy everlasting Gospel go on, from age to age, to bear down all before it, of the dreadful heresies of the present day, and all that may hereafter arise. Thy harvest must come. Thy vintage shall be sure. *Jesus* will cause the blood of the wine-press to be productive of its full blessing. *Men shall be blessed in thee*. And thy people out of all nations shall call thee blessed. And, from time to time, the LORD will gather out his redeemed, and fulfil, in every instance, his holy will and pleasure. The voice *John* once heard, is for ever sounding in the ear of faith; and may the LORD give grace to his people, to receive and believe the record: *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD*! Yea, the SPIRIT confirms the certain truth; for they die in *Jesus*, and are blessed.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

The Church, having been prepared in the preceding Chapter, by seeing her Safety in CHRIST, is in this Chapter taught concerning the Ministry of the seven Angels, with the seven last Plagues. The Song of Moses and the LAMB. The seven Angels come forth from the Temple.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

This is a short, but sweet Chapter. It seems in its contents, principally designed to fortify the Church with the assurance of victory, that the LORD's people, in the worst of times, might feel no fear from any outward exercises, being strengthened with inward grace. It opens with a *sign*, which *John* calls, *great and marvellous*. And great and marvellous it always is, when the *worm Jacob* is made to *thresh the mountains*. And great and marvellous also upon another account, when grace is so blessedly shewn to the Church, in the same moment, the wrath of God is poured out on the ungodly. There is nothing so affecting to a child of God, as when, in the time he feels some new token of God's love, is conscious, when receiving it, he merits God's displeasure; and beholds that displeasure poured out

on others, no more undeserving than himself. The words, upon such occasions, burst involuntarily from the heart, overwhelmed under a sense of distinguishing grace: LORD! *how is it that thou dost manifest thyself unto me, and not unto the world.* John xiv. 22.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 ¶ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgements are made manifest.

By a sea of glass, we cannot literally accept the term, for *John* saith, that he saw, *as it were*, a sea of glass; meaning, most probably, from its shining quality, or, as the sea not unfrequently is, like a mirror. I do not presume to speak decidedly, but as it is said, that this sea of glass appeared as if mingled with fire, and persons standing upon it, and having the harps of God; I confess, that I am inclined to think, the great truths intended to be represented by the whole, is the fountain of CHRIST's blood; the work of GOD the SPIRIT, as a *spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning*; and the love and grace of GOD the FATHER, giving to all the redeemed, who are here said to stand upon it, the song of redemption to sing. And I confess that I am the more inclined to this conclusion, from what the blessed victors over the beast are said to sing. The Song of *Moses* and the LAMB. And what is that but redemption? This song *Moses* sung on the banks of the Red Sea, through which *Israel* was brought safe, while *Egypt* was destroyed. And what was this, but as typical of redemption by CHRIST? Exod. xv. 1—18. And the joining together the servant and the LORD, in my view, as plain as words can make it, shews that redemption by CHRIST was then intended; and that *Moses* acted but as CHRIST's servant. Heb. iii. 5, 6.

But, what I yet more particularly request the Reader to observe with me in this place is, the glorious distinction of character given to the LAMB, as descriptive of all Sovereignty and Almightyness. Nothing can be more palpably clear and evident, than that the words of this song are expressly addressed to CHRIST. King of saints, is one of the special and personal titles of CHRIST. He is made King in Zion, by the decree of JEHOVAH. Psm. ii. 6. And as in all the

departments of nature, providence, and grace, CHRIST presides; and in creation, as well as redemption, he is the Author; those glorious titles, and ascriptions of praise, are in common with the FATHER and the SPIRIT, his own. And what a blessed decision then is the whole, to his eternal Power and GODHEAD, *who is One with the FATHER over all GOD blessed for ever. Amen?* Rom. ix. 5.

The subject here included, which the HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to gather, in this view of the sea of glass, appears to me to be so highly interesting, that while the Church is called upon to behold the faithful standing upon it, singing the triumphal song of redemption, methinks I would ponder it a little as I look on, and beg the Reader to do the same, that we may both together, if it please the LORD, under his divine teaching, take part in it!

When we behold the opposition of hell, to the Church of God, uniformly carried on through all ages, from the first of creation to the present hour, and are assured from scripture, that there will be no intermission in this war until the final consummation of all things; when we take into this view of the subject, that the issue hath nothing doubtful, or uncertain in it; and when we consider no less, that the first, and great design with God, in his threefold character of Persons, hath been for the ultimate accomplishment of the divine glory, we cannot but be immediately impressed with this conviction: that the whole, from beginning to end, hath been from all eternity so arranged and ordered, that not a single circumstance could be left, but, in relation to men, or things, without an injury to the one vast plan of JEHOVAH. Comparing great things with small, in the curious construction of a machine, every part hath its distinct operation; and every part, however small, contributes as essentially to the whole, as that whole, when taken together. The Prophet's vision, which he saw, had *eyes in the wheels.* Ezek. i. 18. Hence, all in the vast scheme of the LORD's government, in the kingdom of grace, as well as in all the departments of nature, are ultimately ministering to his glory. Even the very *wrath of man shall praise him.* Psm. lxxvi. 10. However differently the views of bad men, however oppositely they intend, the LORD hath so arranged and ordered, that they shall contribute, and become subservient to the LORD's design. So sure is that scripture. *The LORD hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.* Prov. xvi. 4.

Though it is impossible, with our present scanty faculties, to go very far into a discovery of this subject, as opened to us in redemption; yet the mere outlines of it do display a somewhat of glory in it, in relation to the LORD's wisdom, and love, and grace to the Church, as cannot fail, under his divine teaching, to give the redeemed child of God an unspeakable pleasure in the view. And, while we look on this sea of glass, and by faith hear the song of redemption, it will be blessed to learn the notes of it, and sing it with them.

The *first* view in which it strikes me, is the divine glory manifested to the Church, in her everlasting relationship to her Husband. This is never to be lost sight of, through all the chapters of redemption. CHRIST, as the Head of his body the Church, was so constituted from all eternity. And as his Church was chosen then to be holy, and without blame before GOD in love, from her union with

him; so it is plain, God's first design, and the accomplishment of his last purpose, in relation to his Church, must be the same. Holiness, and glory, the Lord first intended. Holiness, and glory, the Lord will surely accomplish. Laying this down as a truth perfectly scriptural, and therefore unquestionable; the word of God leads us on to observe, what means the Lord hath ordained, and by what powers he will bring it to pass. Ephes. i. 4, 5. Titus i. 2.

Secondly. We view the Church in the time-state, a fallen sinful state, in which she hath lost all her created holiness in Adam; and is brought into sin and misery, with all the tremendous consequences, which arise therefrom. Here gives opportunity to the Lord, for the vast purposes of his redemption. And, as in the eternity past, the Church had all her holiness in Christ; and as in the eternity to come, all her holiness and glory are in Him; so here, all the blessings of redemption, in her recovery from this time-state of sin and misery, are founded only in Him: pardon, mercy, and peace, are the blessings derived from his cross; and all Christ is, as the Redeemer, and all he hath wrought in redemption, is for this express purpose, to gather his Church from sin and misery, and to present her to himself a glorious Church, made so by himself. 1 Cor. i. 30. Ephes. v. 26, 27.

Thirdly. All the opposition of hell, and all the agents of the devil among men, are only accomplishing the very purposes, which shall best minister to the Lord's glory, and the welfare of his people. Their opposition tends to endear Christ. And the sorrows they put the Lord's people to, have a blessed tendency, to wean the heart from the earth, and to make Christ and heaven more dear. Yea, the very sense of our own sins, and what we feel from the risings of corruption; all have their use, in the promotion of the Lord's glory, and our happiness. There never would have been such sweetness in heaven, as the redeemed will find there, had they never known sin; nor felt the love and grace of Christ, in redeeming them from it. It is blessedly said by the Holy Ghost, that God *was willing to make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory.* Rom. ix. 23. Now, notwithstanding God had afore prepared those vessels unto glory, they never could have been *vessels of mercy*, had they not been first *vessels of sin*. Mercy implies favor shewn to the miserable. Glory and holiness, if given, are given from love, and choice. So that redemption gives a new and additional relish to heaven, and our felicity becomes heightened thereby, in that having once known the sorrows of sin and misery, we sing our song of triumph in redemption, as on a sea of glass, mingled with fire.

Fourthly, and above all. By this blessed process, the Church of God derives an unspeakable joy, and full of glory, in knowing Christ under his double blessed name, both as an Head, and as a Redeemer; and God our Father hath a double glory of praise and love, from his Church. He hath chosen us in Christ *before the foundation of the world.* And he hath accepted us in Christ in time, *to the praise of the glory of his grace.* And God the Holy Ghost hath a double glory of praise and love, in having anointed the Church in Christ, when the Church was set up in Christ before the world, and when regenerating the Church in Christ from the

Adam-fall transgression in time, when *dead in trespasses and sins*. And hence the double song of *Moses* and the LAMB. It would have been a glory inconceivably great and blessed, had JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, when making the Church one with CHRIST, have taken the Church at once to heaven with CHRIST, without passing through this world of sin and misery. It would have been a blessedness unspeakable, and full of glory, even if passing through this world without knowing sin, or misery, or any thing of a fallen state. But then, we should have known nothing of the sweet and gracious office-character of the Holy Persons of the GODHEAD, as we now know them. We should have been for ever ignorant of that electing love of God the FATHER, in distinguishing, preserving, pardoning grace, and mercy. We should have lost that sweet and precious character of Jesus, as our Goel, our Kinsman Redeemer; neither should we have known God the HOLY GHOST, as the Quickener of our spirits, from death and sin, to life, and righteousness in CHRIST. And heaven itself would never have rung, as it now doth, and for ever will, with the sweet sound of redemption, and the beholding CHRIST as our Redeemer. But now, by this vast scheme, of infinite wisdom, love, and power, we discover (little as our discoveries go towards a perfect apprehension of such a mystery) enough to admire, and in that admiration to adore, the wonders of divine love, in the wonders of divine wisdom. Oh! how may every regenerated, redeemed, justified, and sanctified believer, as he looks on this sea of glass by faith, and hears the blessed spirits singing the song of *Moses* and the LAMB, join the chorus of praise, saying, *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!*

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

It is not heaven, the place of the blessed in glory, that is here meant; for what is said soon after, verse 8, of being *filled with smoke*, if there were no other cause, would do this away. But it is the Church, which for the most part all along is intended, when heaven is mentioned. From the Church, therefore, *John* beheld the seven angels, or messengers, coming forth, with the seven last plagues. Perhaps these may mean even some very humble ministers of CHRIST, in his Church. Their number *seven*, (which is a perfect number,) is not very probably intended, a certain number of seven, and no more, neither of one particular period; but the perfection of their order, being ordained by God the HOLY GHOST, and their perfection in CHRIST. Their dress also being priestly, in white linen, and girt about the breasts with golden girdles, implies their order, being made both *Kings and Priests to God and the FATHER*. REV.

i. 6. Reader! do observe what uniformity in all God's people. Their robes, are CHRIST's robes. Their ordination is from CHRIST. And, as the worshippers of the beast, and of the dragon, have *their* marks: so the LORD's people have *their's*. Oh! the unspeakable mercy, in these distinctions! *The LORD knoweth them that are his!* 2 Tim. ii. 19. And, let not the Reader forget, that this is the security, against the awful day coming on, when all shall worship the beast, except they whose names are in the book of life of the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. xiii. 8. Ezek. ix. 5, 6.

7 ¶ And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

We have heard nothing of those beasts since the opening of the vision at the *fourth* Chapter, to the *seventh*, excepting once at the *fourteenth*; but now here is one of them coming forward again, to give the seven vials, full of God's wrath, to the seven angels. The beasts, and the angels or messengers, are acting as servants on those high occasions; and, as they all are said to come forth from the temple, it plainly shews, that the judgments to be poured from these vials, on the seat of the beast and false prophet, will be from the Church.

I do not think it necessary to enlarge on this part of the prophecy, as what is here said is only by way of preparation to what is to follow, under the ministry of the vials. The temple filled with smoke should seem to refer to what is said of the LORD's house by Isaiah. Chap. vi. 4. It cannot, I think, as some have supposed, refer to the heresies with which the Church was beset; for those heresies are *from without*, whereas the smoke here is *within*. Moreover, it is said, that the temple was filled with smoke, *from the glory of the LORD*; a decided proof, in my view, that the smoke cannot refer to heresies of any kind. But I leave the Reader to his own conclusions upon the subject, under the grace of God.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we were called upon in the last Chapter, to shout with songs of holy joy, in beholding the LAMB, our great and glorious Redeemer, standing with his Church, on Mount Zion, encircled with his army: and here we are called upon again, to shout with the Church, in beholding the people of God, who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, singing *the song of Moses and the LAMB!* Oh! the felicity, when from a renewed heart, regenerated by grace, we can sing the praises of Him, *who hath called us out of darkness, into his marvellous light!*

And already we contemplate the sure victory over hell, and all the awful heresies abounding, in the view of the angels going forth from the Church of God, with their vials of God's wrath, to pour out upon them. Every false religion, every idol, and abomination, shall sink under the dreadful plague, to be poured upon them. The man of sin, that mystery of iniquity, which still doth work, shall be destroyed; and that wicked one, both of East, and West, the LORD will consume with the SPIRIT of his mouth, and destroy, with the brightness of his coming. We see the seven angels coming forth from the temple. We behold them armed with the seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God. And, by faith, we contemplate the glory of God, which shall assuredly follow, when they begin their awful visitation. LORD JESUS! arm thy redeemed with grace, and strengthen them with power, to bear their testimony against the awful abominations of the day. And, oh! for grace to look on, stand still, and see the salvation of our God! For yet a little while, and the antichristian heresy of the West, and the false prophet of the East, shall both be no more; and the true Church of CHRIST shall behold them, with the dragon, all cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall never again harass and afflict the Church any more. Even so: Amen!

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter we behold all the Angels, one after another, pouring out their Vials. The awful Consequences which followed are related. The sudden coming of CHRIST is noticed. A Blessedness is pronounced on him that watcheth.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth

As in the opening of this Chapter we are called upon to the observation of the ministry of the *Vials*, which contain the last plagues of our God, upon the enemies of the faith; I shall beg to do upon this occasion, as I did before the opening of the ministry of the *Seals*, and the ministry of the *Trumpets*, give some short statement, according to my view, of the *Vials themselves*.

And, *first*. I think it will not admit of a question, but that the opening of the vials, took place at that period, be that period fixed by the different calculations of men, at whatever time it may, when, after the Church had been long persecuted, and darkened, under the Pope and his confederates, the pure Gospel of CHRIST, began to hold up its head. There may be, and indeed there is a diversity of opinion, at what period to place this; whether when this kingdom first began to emerge from popery, or at a more remote period, from the present. I have said before, that though I have here and there

spoken in round numbers of years, such as the time that *Pagan Rome* continued, after *CHRIST's* return to glory; and the probable time, that *Arius* arose, with his awful heresy: yet I do not mean that this *Poor Man's Commentary* shall have any thing to do with calculating times, or seasons, as the probable period, *when* the predictions in this book, remaining to be fulfilled, may be expected to be accomplished. I know that it would much gratify curiosity, for all men by nature love to be supposed, as seeing more into future events than their neighbors. But though this is very natural, yet it is not from grace. I therefore have confined myself to form judgment of the *facts*, and not of the *times*. These will all open in due course, as the *LORD* hath appointed. I therefore, on this subject, of the ministry of the *vials*, would make this one general observation, namely, that they certainly opened, when the pure Gospel, after the long obscurity under which it had lain in popish legends, and the trumpery of that heresy, began to lift up its head. Then it was, according to my view, when *John* saw that angel flying in the midst of heaven, *having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth; and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people.* Rev. xiv. 6.

Secondly. It is important, for the right apprehension of the ministry of the *vials*, to remember, that though they are placed last, in point of order, in this book; yet the opening of the seals were not all finished, neither the sounding of the trumpets all over, before the *first* vial, and indeed several of the succeeding ones, had performed their ministry. This is abundantly evident, for the greater part of the vials have done their office; indeed all have finished excepting the *two* last: yet the seventh trumpet is not yet sounded, neither will it, (as is most probable,) before the *seventh vial* comes to be poured out.

And, *thirdly.* It may be proper to make one *general* observation more, on the subject of those *vials*, before we go on, to look at each of them particularly; and to remark, that the plagues which follow each vial poured out, do not so totally pass away, as that the whole wrath is expended of one, before the next vial which was to succeed, comes to be poured out. Not so. For we behold the consequences of some of the early vials, even operating now; and, therefore, we are not to conclude, that one woe is past, in all those instances, before another comes. The whole ministry of the vials is directed by the *LORD*, as his last plagues, to bring down the enemies of his salvation; and, therefore, they are so directed by the *LORD*, as shall best accomplish this purpose. Having thus stated, in a general way and manner, the subject of the ministry of the vials, at large; we will now prosecute the Chapter, and attend to what may be supposed, under each, as particularly intended.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

There can be no doubt, but that it was the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, whose voice *John* heard, as mentioned in the former verse, thus sending forth his servants on their employment; or *GOD the HOLY GHOST*,

whose office it is to ordain to the ministry. In either sense, it is blessed. For in either point of view, it must be attended with success. And most blessed was the success of it. For the effects of the pouring out of the first vial was, that a noisome, and grievous sore, fell upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

The Reader will remember that I do not speak decidedly upon any point of doubtful meaning, but I venture to believe that it was the pouring out of this first Vial, which is said to have been poured upon the earth, that is, the empire of the Pope, which produced a change upon the minds of numbers, concerning him and his heresy. For what is a noisome and grievous sore, in a spiritual sense, but a sense of dissatisfaction. And when the eyes of the common people, here called the earth, through grace, were opened to see the folly of bulls, and grants, and licences, and pardons, all for money, what could sour the mind more, than the having been long hoodwinked by such iniquity.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

We have here the *second* Angel's ministry, and the effect of the *second* vial poured upon the sea. Perhaps, as the *earth* might mean the home of the Pope, so the *sea* might mean the distant parts, where his influence extended. As the sea opens a turnpike for commerce and trade, by the sea, it is probable might be meant, death to the Pope's interest abroad, as well as at home. For, as those vials poured out, were full of God's wrath, so wherever they came, they brought destruction to his heresy. And it is possible, that this vial had respect to the death of the *Pope's* interest in this kingdom. Death I am sure it must be, to all that do receive the image of the beast in future. And death it is, to all that have received it, in all that is past.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 ¶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink: for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgements.

The love of money is the root of all evil. And those who have hired themselves out for the sake of gain, (and no other cause could

ever influence any man, to write or speak, on the side of such glaring folly as popery,) to send forth pamphlets in justification of the beast or her whelps, may be supposed to be the rivers and fountains of waters here spoken of, on whom the *third* Angel poured out his vial. And the acknowledgments of God's justice, at the pouring out of this vial is very sweetly introduced, as well as confirmed by another angel. What can be more awful, than the contemplation of the unnumbered murders, perpetrated under the inquisition, and other engines of that detestable monarchy, which sheltering itself under the title of holiness, hath been productive of more horrid acts of cruelty, than all the paganism of the world.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

By the pouring the *fourth* vial upon the sun, some have thought that the *Pope's* power is meant to have been thereby eclipsed. Indeed, as all the vials are directed to the overthrow of Antichrist, in every way, and by every direction, we may suppose this point under every one hath been accomplishing. And the awful effects of blaspheming God is, as might be supposed, the sure result of vials of wrath, poured out upon the ungodly.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

As this is the last vial poured out specially upon the beast, so it is worthy the Reader's observation, that it is said to have been poured out upon the seat of the beast, meaning his whole empire. And I leave the Reader to his own thoughts to consider, whether the wonderful events which the last thirty years have brought forward, in humbling the whole papal authority, may not have been what is here said. Certain it is, that the *sixth* vial is not yet poured out. And when it is, the *Turkish* dominions, as the river *Euphrates* proves, will receive its contents. It will be said, perhaps, that the Pope is lately recovered from his palsied state. To which it may be answered, yes, he is. But when the *seventh* trumpet comes to be sounded, and the *seventh* vial to be poured out, the whole influence both of Pope, Turk, and devil, will fall to rise no more, and all will be summed up, in the everlasting triumphs of CHRIST.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 ¶ Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The pouring out of the *sixth* vial is yet to come. And when it comes, the chief ministry of it, will be upon the kingdom of the false prophet. This blessed event, brings on the total overthrow of that Anti-christian power. The river *Euphrates* implies his whole territory. And what a wonderful effect will it produce? *Isaiah* the prophet evidently alluded to this in one of his Chapters, where he saith; *And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day. And the LORD shall smite Egypt, he shall smite and heal it. And they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and he shall heal them. In that day shall there be an highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt my people; and Assyria the work of my hands; and Israel mine inheritance.* *Isaiah* xix. 21—25. Hence, if this scripture be in reference to this event, as I venture to believe it is, and the *sixth* trumpet overthrow, as I believe it will, the false prophet, and totally destroy his empire, the LORD will bring out his chosen ones that are now there, and by the sovereignty of his grace, will cause the Jews to return and the redeemed to be together, and the LORD will open an highway for all his people, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, bond and free, to return to *Zion* with everlasting songs upon their heads, and when all these Anti-christian heresies are destroyed, his redeemed out of all nations shall come and flow together, and CHRIST will prepare his people for his reign upon earth.

And in confirmation of this, let the Reader further observe, that in the close of what is here said, under the *sixth* vial, the LORD JESUS

CHRIST himself is said to come, and to come suddenly. The LORD will strike the last deadly blow to all the powers. And when the unclean spirits, that is, the spirits of devils, are seen coming out of the mouth of these Anti-christian powers, and are gathering to the battle of the great day of God, that is, not the day of judgment, for that is not yet, but to this which is before it, and are drawn there to their own ruin, then will CHRIST's power be known, and felt, and acknowledged by all.

The place of battle called *Armageddon*, is only specified by way of confirmation. It seems to have been taken from *Megiddo*, the valley *Ar*, or more properly *Haar*, signifying the mountain of the same place. I think the name is only used, to shew how open and exposed, as an high mountain it shall be.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Here ends the pouring out of the vials, and a tremendous pouring out it is. It is said to be into the air, meaning the empire of Satan, who is emphatically called, *the prince of the power of the air*. Ephes. ii. 2. But we must include the whole territories of Pope, and Turk, also, because *Satan's* empire is over them, and the air takes in the whole of their empire and *Satan's* together. And as this puts an end to all the struggles, which for so many hundreds of years have been carried on by hell and its auxiliaries, against the kingdoms of our God, and of his CHRIST, we may well suppose, that the decision which is final, will be most strikingly glorious. I shall not in this place, anticipate what is said, in allusion to this great day of

CHRIST, in the latter part of this book of prophecy; but if the Reader will read what is delivered on this subject, Chapter xix. from the 11th verse to the end, he will see the best explanation of the transactions of this *sixth* vial.

I beg the Reader, however, that he will not too hastily pass away from this most blessed view of CHRIST, under the *seventh* vial. If voices, thunderings, and lightening bespake the manifestations of the LORD JESUS, and a great voice came forth from the temple, that is the Church, saying, *it is done*. Oh! how ought we to hail the glorious event! JESUS had before been seen standing upon the earth, and upon the sea, and swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever, that in the days *when the mystery of God shall be finished, there should be time no longer*; and here we behold the confirmation of the same, and CHRIST himself coming to finish it. Chap. x. 1—7.

Oh! the unspeakable joy, when the Church shall see the blood of the saints avenged, the whore and all her cursed crew, which from age to age, have been drunken with the blood of the saints, cast down to rise no more. And hell repaid his numerous temptations, whereby the saints of God, through the whole time-state of the Church, have been assaulted with his devilish cruelties. How will that hymn of praise burst forth from ten thousand times ten thousand souls, in unceasing love and thanksgiving to our adorable LORD; *We give thee thanks, LORD GOD Almighty, which art, and which was, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned!* Chap. xi. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

Look up, and contemplate the LORD, sending forth from his Church, the seven Angels, and messengers with his seven last plagues, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to deliver his people. Then let the Reader consider, how sure, how everlastingly sure, is the LORD's Church and people. What though for a while the enemy seems to triumph, and the redeemed of the LORD are oppressed by the mighty, yet *the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD, who is also their strength in the time of need*.

How awful are these pourings out of the vials of divine wrath? One after another, arising higher and higher in the scale of judgment. But so desperately hardened in sin, are the enemies of our God, and of his CHRIST, that though the sinner is scorched with fire and great heat, yet he only blasphemeth the name of God, and repents not to give the LORD glory.

My soul! learn from hence, to trace all thy mercies to their source. It is God's everlasting love, which hath chosen thee in CHRIST, and preserved thee in CHRIST, and accepted thee in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Hence, all thy mercies in JESUS, by which the vials of wrath, poured out upon the ungodly cannot come nigh thee. Blessed JESUS! let my soul be on the look out for thy coming, that no midnight hour may surprize me, no blasphemies of men or devils may alarm me. And, when *Babylon* shall come into remembrance before God, and our God shall give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, thy Church may shout aloud in her destruction, and both heaven and earth praise God with exceeding joy.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

Under the Representation of a Woman, arrayed in purple and scarlet as shewn to John, the Whore of Babylon. Her Character given. The Victory of the Lamb. The Whore's Punishment.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

We cannot well be at a loss to discover, who is here meant, if we call to remembrance, that in scripture language, Persons are spoken of by figures, and places by waters. That this woman is a city, the last verse of this Chapter, in so many words plainly saith, *the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* And what great city but Rome, which had so many provinces under her, and in a religious sense, (that is, I mean a mere nominal religion,) how many kings and nations have owned the Pope's supremacy. So that nothing can be more clearly defined. Add to these, it is a very usual thing, to call states and empires harlots and whores, when becoming profane and ungodly. Thus the Lord complained of Israel; *How is the faithful city become an harlot.* Isaiah i. 21. Waters and rivers are terms used in scripture for states and people; yea, in this very Chapter, the term is explained. *And he saith unto me, the waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,* verse 15. Hence, therefore, here are explanations given, as plain as words can make them, in proof that this great whore, is a great city, that hath rule over the kings of the earth, and the many waters she sitteth upon, expresseth her power and authority. So, that *Papal Rome* and none else, can be meant. This is a great point in discovery.

The next account is, that she is said to commit fornication with the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth; and to have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Now when we consider, how many nations profess popery, surely we discover the awful proof of her fornications. And when we call to mind, the blood of the martyrs she has shed, we may well call her thirst after blood drunkenness. We shall see by and by, as we prosecute the Chapter, the number of those kings, that are tributes to the whore. But this in due time.

3 ¶ So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

5 ¶ And upon her foreheads *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration.

Let the Reader recollect, that *John* beheld all this in vision, similar to *Ezekiel*, who, while he was at *Chebar*, his mind was led to *Jerusalem*. Ezek. viii. 3. So *John* was in *Patmos*, and he talks of being carried away in the spirit into the wilderness. All the characters here given of this woman, are descriptive of *Rome* and the *Pope*, and impossible to be applied to any other. The scarlet-colored *beast*, implies the regal power. The names full of blasphemy, are those by which the *Pope* is known. Such as his holiness, who is a sinner, the vicar of *CHRIST*, and the Head of the Church. His dress decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. But more especially the names in his forehead. And if it be true, as is said that the *Popes*, until the time of *Julius* the Third, always wore the word *mystery* on their forehead, and that he dropped it, when he found this portion of the scripture was applied to him, and his wearing the word considered a confirmation of it, all these circumstances, are unanswerably decisive to whom they belong. And if to these be added, the hierarchy of cardinals, archbishops, monks, and abbots, their traffic in the sale of indulgencies, holy water, penance, and absolutions, and the nefarious trade, carried on under the color of religion, it should seem, that the title of mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, cannot be withheld for a moment, either from the place of *Rome*, or the person of the *Pope*. And though *John*, it appears, was astonished at what he beheld, marvelling perhaps, that there should be such characters upon earth, and at the long-suffering and patience of God, in bearing with them; yet, such is the awful depravity of human nature, when void of God's grace, that nothing of atrocity can be too bad, for the corrupt heart to follow. Reader, such views, shocking as they are, are yet profitable. Oh! how loudly do they preach to us, the blessed doctrine of distin-

guishing grace; and which is the sole cause, wherefore one man differs from another.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is,

9 ¶ And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 ¶ And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 ¶ These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

There can be no doubt, but that when the whole of this blessed book of prophecy comes to be unfolded, every minute circumstance concerning it, will appear to the Church, as plain, that we shall only wonder at our dulness of apprehension, in not having discovered it before. But certain it is, that what is here said, is not rendered so perfectly clear at present, as that the whole is level to our thoughts. That the seven kings are those that worship the beast, we can easily conceive, and that both those that receive the mark of the beast, as well as the beast and false prophet, shall finally be cast into the bottomless pit, these are truths we can readily apprehend. But concerning the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, and the eighth that shall arise and go into perdition, together with those other ten kings, who receive power for one hour with the beast,

these things have called forth a great variety of opinions, but there are none on which we can lean with a certainty of assurance, that they are correct. I therefore pass them all by, and desire not to be wise above what is written.

In the place therefore of writing upon mere conjecture and supposition, I would beg to offer a short observation which the present moment seems to furnish, and which, if I am correct, may be profitable. I assume for granted, (what I venture to conclude, none but the worshippers of the beast will deny,) that the woman which *John* saw sitting upon the great waters, is Papal Rome, and if so, the late wonderful events very clearly manifest, that the Lord's purposes concerning this heresy, hath undergone a great change within the last *thirty years*! To what a humiliating state was this Anti-christian power brought, before a late change raised her up again. Now, the Prophet *Daniel*, speaks of the scattering of the power of the holy people, and then all these things shall be finished. Dan. xii. 7.

And that *Daniel* had one and the same object in view, and *John* and *Daniel* were both taught by the same HOLY SPIRIT is most certain, by comparing Dan. xii. 7. with Rev. xii. 14. Hence, therefore, I am inclined to believe, that the late humbling of this Anti-christian power, is only preparatory to a greater extent of power than she hath ever yet had, and as the language she useth in the next Chapter, seems to imply. And, thus, just before her final overthrow, she shall exult in her security, and seem to bid defiance to heaven and earth. *She saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* Chap. xviii. 7. This appears to me to be her present language, in consequence of the recent lifting up, after her former depression. I shall rejoice, if it be the Lord's will, and for the Lord's glory, that I am mistaken in my expectation, and that she will not arise higher. But the scattering of the power of the holy people, which the Prophet speaks of, hath not in my view taken place, neither are the two witnesses slain, neither hath the sixth vial been as yet been poured out. All these events appear to me, to be first expected, before that this intoxicated woman will have her plagues come upon her in one hour; and her everlasting destruction follow. And here for the present I leave this subject.

14 ¶ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 ¶ And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

All indeed make war with the Lamb; that is, with the Lamb's followers. Both *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, though in themselves no friends to each other, but when CHRIST or his people are in view, all the *Herods*, and all the *Pilates* of the earth, with the Gentiles and the people of all descriptions of carnal men, are joined together. Every thing in the natural mind, unrenewed by grace, is hostile to CHRIST. But, Reader, observe what is said, *the LAMB shall overcome them*. Oh! yes! And in Him, and His righteousness, the feeblest of this little army, shall overcome them too.

I cannot refrain from begging my Reader to remark with me, what a blessed and glorious account is given of CHRIST's Person, and what a lively one of his people. For he is LORD of lords, and King of kings. Yes! blessed for ever, thou Almighty God, be thou in thine own eternal nature and essence! Thine own eternal distinctions as one in the GODHEAD make these titles thine. And by creation, providence, grace, and glory, thou, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, hast, and art all. And how sweet is it to the souls of thy people, that by means of their oneness with thee, in that nature of theirs thou hast taken into union with thyself, they that are with thee, are *called, and chosen, and faithful*. Yes, LORD! by thy calling them with an holy calling, they are proved to have been chosen of God, before the foundation of the world. For whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And by their call in grace, they are made faithful in CHRIST JESUS. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of such distinguishing grace! Reader! what saith your heart's testimony to these things? Can you, and do you, take up the sweet language the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle teacheth the Church. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began*. For the Commentary on the 15th and 18th verses, see the 1st and 2nd. 2 Tim. i. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED and condescending Teacher of *John*! Thy Church desire to praise thee, O LORD JESUS, for causing thy servant the Apostle to be shewn, and the Church through him also, concerning this great spiritual whore, which sitteth upon many waters, committeth fornication with the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, and hath been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Through thy grace, LORD, instructing thy people, we cannot mistake her character. Her purple and scarlet robes, her gold and proud trap-

pings, the blasphemy of her pretended power, and the names she assumes, her whore's forehead and the mystery she hath put there, all mark her out, as the object of horror and detestation, to thy people. And while we behold her drunken with the blood of thy saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, we cannot but wonder, with great admiration! Oh! the awful state to which the nature of man is brought down! Oh! the astonishing extent of the long suffering of Almighty God.

Dearest LORD JESUS! the souls of thy people are relieved in the pleasing prospect, that shortly thou wilt come and root out of thy kingdom, all things that offend. She, which hath intoxicated herself with the blood of thy saints, shall have her flesh eaten by those who professed to love her. She, who hated the meek and humble followers of the Lamb, shall herself be despised; yea, they shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Oh! what a relief to my soul is it, to turn from the view of images so horrible, and to contemplate Jesus under his own rightful character, LORD of lords, and King of kings! May every knee bow before thee! And oh! what praises shall I offer to my God, that JESUS hath a seed that serve him, a generation that call him blessed; who are *called*, and *chosen*, and *faithful*! LORD! do thou in those awful times, make them and keep them faithful. It is thy sweet province, and sure I am, it is my LORD's delight, *to keep them from falling, and to present them 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.*

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

The Fall of Babylon. God's People come out from her. The Kings, and great Men, and Merchants, wait for her. The Saints of God rejoice over her.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory,

This is a very blessed and refreshing Chapter, in which we arrive at the close of the history, in that part of it, which concerns the destruction of the whore; here called *Babylon*. The date of this Chapter, must be under the *fifth* vial, and, in correspondence also to the *sixth* trumpet, both which we are still under, though, as I before remarked, in the few general observations on the vials, that they are certainly not so distinct in their ministry, as that one hath fully exhausted all which belonged to it, before the succeeding one came to be poured out, for, frequently, through the whole that is already past, we find from their history, one runs into another. See Chapter xvi. Commentary, on verse I.

The several parts of this Chapter refresh the Church of God, with their blessed informations. The long prayed-for time is here come. She that deluged the earth with the blood of the saints, is now brought to her account. The HOLY GHOST describes the different effects wrought upon the minds of men, in the view of her ruin. Those of states and empires, as well as the shipmasters and merchants, who profited by her delusion on the world, lament her downfall, which involves in it their own. While the Church of God, in not only that part of it yet upon earth, but the Holy Apostles and Prophets now in heaven, join in the triumphant song. Who this Messenger is, whom *John* saw coming down from the Church, to give the glorious tidings is not said. A very blessed account of his greatness is given, for it is said, that he lightened the earth with his glory, that is, I apprehend, not the glories of his person, but the glory of his intelligence. It could not be CHRIST I should suppose, because CHRIST is the judge of the whore, and He that will come under the seventh vial, to punish in Person, the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet together. Chap. xvi. 15—17.

I admire the grace of the LORD towards *John*, and the Church through him, that it seems to have been immediately after the vision the LORD hath favored him with, in the preceding Chapter of the whore's prosperity and pride, that this of her judgment immediately followed. So sweetly doth the LORD time his mercies to his people, that the lifting up their souls with joy, shall speedily succeed their exercises of sorrow.

2 ¶ And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

The loud cry is intended to shew, how extensive, as well as glorious, its blissful proclamation is. Perhaps, many of the LORD's hidden ones are supposed to be in *Babylon* at the time. They shall hear it and rejoice. And multitudes beyond *Babylon*, yea, in those islands of ours and other nations, who have been long oppressed under the secret, if not open tyranny of the whore's influence, shall hear it also. And I beg the Reader to observe, with me, how every feature describes this mystical *Babylon*, this *Rome*. It is now discovered at her fall, how like antient *Babylon* in natural things, occupied only by reptiles and venomous creatures, so that no traveller can venture near it; mystical *Babylon* hath been in moral and spiritual things the habitation of devils from her damnable doctrines, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, from her sinful,

loose, and dissolute practices. See a striking account of *antient* Babylon, in proof of the former instance. Isaiah xiii. 19 to the end. See also for a striking account of *mystical* Babylon, in proof of the latter. 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.

Let the Reader observe the strong expressions of joy in the Angel's repeating his words; *Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen*. Such mercies cannot be too often repeated. For although, through the protecting grace of the LORD, not a single one of the LORD's redeemed family, can the beast, and the whore, or the false prophet, or the devil, draw away, so as finally to perish, (see Rev. xiii. 8.) yet, what persecutions and punishments, yea, temporal death, hath the inquisition of this heresy occasioned, for the many centuries in which the horrible delusion hath prevailed. Oh! who but must rejoice, in the glorious proclamation, and repeat with holy joy, and praises to the God of our salvation: *Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen*.

When it is said, that *all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*, it must be understood, as meaning those nations only, where her cursed influence and authority hath reached. *Heathens* and *Mahometans* are not included. Their delusion is from hell also, but under a different shape and character. In countries where Christianity was professed, as it was when the empire under *Constantine* became Christian; that is, became *nominally* so, in a mere outward form; there the devil, by a master-piece peculiarly his own, professed to be a Christian also; the more artfully to deceive. And this gave him an opportunity to introduce a variety of sects, which by denying the glorious truths of the Gospel in CHRIST'S GODHEAD, and redemption by his blood, might as effectually lull his subjects on to ruin, as among heathens a total ignorance of CHRIST would accomplish the same. Let the Reader mark these things as he observes what is here said, and as he looks into the world, and if the LORD be his teacher, he will discover, that the devil hath his various ways and operations to deceive. But let the Reader still further observe, that his deceptions can go no further, than the LORD hath limited him. *The LORD knoweth them that are his*. And of such the LORD saith, *none shall pluck them out of his hands*. His Israel, his Church, his chosen are scattered. But, *He will search and seek them out, from every place where they are scattered, in the cloudy and dark day*. When *Babylon* falls, his redeemed shall be gathered out of her. When the false prophet is destroyed, JESUS will take care of his outcasts, which are now in the midst of that *Moab*. Isaiah xvi. 4. That sweet verse is a volume in point of fulness, and a whole charter in point of security, to all the LORD's people. *He shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven*. Mark xiii. 27.

4 ¶ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

I think it more than probable, that this voice which *John* heard, and which he calls another, by way of distinction from the one before, was CHRIST. *John* doth not call him an Angel. And if he had, we know that CHRIST is not unfrequently called the Angel of the Covenant. Malachi iii. 1. But he saith he heard another voice from heaven, from the Church. And it is not unlikely that it was CHRIST, because JESUS dwells in *Zion*. And he delights to make himself known to his people. He loves to call them so. And here the voice saith *my people*. Every thing is endearing, where we can see JESUS, and hear JESUS.

But I must particularly beg the Reader, to attend to the sweet words themselves. *Come out of her, my people*. May we not suppose, that whenever the fall of *Rome* takes place, many of God's dear ones, both already called, and some as yet uncalled, will be there. Nay, may there not be many of JESUS's own, which are then unborn in nature, and therefore must be preserved in the loins, or bowels of their natural parents for the future purpose of regeneration! *Destroy it not, there is a blessing in it!* Isaiah lxxv. 8. What a subject to the imagination doth this open. And how many of the LORD's hidden ones may be found there in that day, whom that day's judgment shall minister to their conversion? How many of God's timid ones, who, though secretly taught of God, like *Lot*, are living in the *Sodom* city, grieved as his soul was, *with the filthy conversation of the wicked*; but from various causes there remain? Psm. cxx. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 7. In all these and numberless other cases, that our imagination cannot form the voice to come out from among her, will be heard and obeyed, for the LORD saith as to *Lot*, *haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither*. And as it was then, so will it be in spiritual *Sodom*, and all similar destructions of the ungodly. *It came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities, in the which Lot dwelt*. Gen. xix. 22—29.

The separating from every thing unsuitable to the faith of a child of God, is included in what is here said, and the recompensing the evil an ungodly conduct of infidels hath imposed upon the LORD's people, is perfectly consistent with the precept of *not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing*. For let the Reader observe, this is not an injury of a *private* and *personal* nature. This is the LORD's cause, and of public concern to the Church. As the whore hath burnt and destroyed, robbed and murdered the saints of God, for their adherence to CHRIST, so all that love CHRIST, must give no countenance to her heresies. No favor is to be shewn on any account, to the cause of the whore, though to the persons of the ignorant, in the communion of her heresy, tenderness is to be manifested, if *peradventure*, God should give them repentance to the ac-

knowledging of the truth, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the LORD God who judgeth her.

I beg the Reader to attend to what is here said, for, in my view, it throws a great light upon the events going on in the present day. Let the Reader recollect, or look back to the observations made in the preceding Chapter, after verse the 13th, and connect what is here said with those remarks. And in addition I would desire to say, that when it be considered, the late ascendancy the Pontiff hath gained in those dominions, he had for a while, seemingly lost, and the strides which are still making by him and his agents, to get back to his interest certain powers, which once protested against him, and I think he will be somewhat inclined to think with me, if he be not altogether of my opinion, that Popery, before the total overthrow of it, will be more elevated than ever.

Let the Reader consider, and reconsider those two verses. She is said to be living deliciously, and to say in her heart, *I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*, when, in the moment, her plagues shall come upon her in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; yea, she shall be utterly burned with fire. If language conveys any thing, here is great prosperity succeeded by great woe. And, what shall prevent the power of the Pope from being greater than it ever hath been. What shall come between the present indifferency in some, and the cordial affection of others, to a more extensive toleration, and by a transition then hardly perceivable, exalting the whore of Rome to her former splendor, yea, greater splendor than ever; when the loose doctrines, and looser conduct of the great mass of men, are already so ripe for it.

It is the mercy of the LORD's people, that by his grace, they are kept from all danger. And it is no less their mercy, to have come out from among her. But this scripture explained by present events, leaves in my view no question, but that this Anti-christian heresy will have a lifting up, just before her final overthrow, in possessing again some of her long-lost territories, and be the queen, as she herself saith of them and all her dependencies in the very hour, the LORD pours out her plagues in one day, and death, everlasting mourning, famine, and fire will be her portion.

9 ¶ And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgement come.

11 ¶ And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her: for no man buyeth their merchandize any more.

12 The merchandize of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas! alas, that great

city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness: for in one hour is she made desolate.

The oftener I read this funeral lamentation of the mourners, that follow the whore to her burying; the more I am struck with astonishment, at the impudence of her deceptions, and the forbearance of the Lord. To think that such a mummary should have gulled the nations so many hundreds of years is wonderful! And indeed it would be hardly possible to reconcile it with the common sense of mankind, were it not that so many profited by the cheat. Let the Reader take notice of some of the many.

First. The kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her. These are those who have profited by the same tricks, as the whore herself hath played off, to keep the lower order in subjection. For when confession, and penance, and the profits of all the trumpery of forms and ceremonies are done away, they as well as she, will find cause to lament that their juggling is over.

Secondly. The merchants of the earth will mourn also at her downfall. These are not only the common traders at Rome, who take advantage of the religion of the place, to impose upon the foreigners which come to their markets, but chiefly is intended, the whore's merchants; namely, the dealers in pardons and indulgencies, who sell licences for sin, and pray people out of purgatory for money. It is said, verse 13, that their merchandize, is *the souls of men*. And this indeed is the chief traffic. All such must follow the funeral procession, for they will for ever shut up shop, when the whore's plagues come; for as it is here said, *no man buyeth her merchandize any more*.

Thirdly. Every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, are involved in the calamity: And well they may. For both at home and abroad, by sea and by land, wherever the whore's influence extendeth, and her priests and people find the trade profitable, the loss of it in money matters must be ruinous. So that the whore's downfall brings after it, the total overthrow of the whorish trade.

Fourthly. But one feature deserves to be noticed under all, namely, while they all bewail and lament her, it is said, that *they all stood afar off*. Here is a striking feature. Though sinners herd together in sin, yet in judgment, they wish to separate. No one helpeth his fellow. Like the first transgressor in the garden, they rather accuse than soften each other's crime. They stand afar off. Oh! the awful state of the ungodly.

20 ¶ Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her.

I admire this verse. It comes in with a delightful tide of joy, in the midst of the troubled waters. Here there are several sorts of persons called upon to rejoice in her destruction. *First*, the inhabitants

of heaven, meaning the Church now in glory, who, when upon earth, felt and groaned under the oppression of the whore. They, who in another Chapter are described as under the altar in heaven crying out for her destruction. Chap. vi. 10.

Secondly. The holy Apostles and Prophets, whose sacred writings the whore hath perverted, to her nefarious trade, in slaying the souls of men.

And, *Thirdly.* All the faithful of the LORD may be considered as included, because, all the living upon earth, cannot but rejoice that her power is gone.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The figure of a great millstone cast into the sea, is only to shew the eternal and unalterable nature of the whore's destruction. She is sunk to rise no more. Neither shall the voice of bridegroom or bride, or a single blessing be found any more within her walls for ever!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED be the LORD! the destruction of the whore is come! One hour, when the time all along predicted arrives, is enough, and all her traffic in hunting souls, and ruining the world, is done away for ever. Of what avail is all her pomp, and sitting as a queen among the nations!

Precious LORD JESUS! give thy redeemed grace to hear thy love-calls, and to come out from among her! How many of thy dear ones are now hidden where the seat of the beast is! How many

more, yet to be called, are found therein! Oh! bring them out, and house them in thy little *Zoar*, when thou makest the awful overthrow.

Methinks I would hail the Church, whoever lives to see it in the view of the blessed event. The very prospect of it is blessed. With what joy will the redeemed welcome the day. Yea, heaven itself will take part in the felicity of it. The Apostles and Prophets, gone before, will rejoice over her, when God hath avenged his people on her. LORD! be thou eternally and everlastingly praised, in the total overthrow of thine enemies, and the salvation of thy people!

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Joy in Heaven, in the View of the LORD's Triumphs over Antichrist upon Earth. The Church in Heaven celebrates CHRIST's Marriage with his Church. A blessed and glorious View of CHRIST. The Beast and false Prophet cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgements: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

John's attention seems here to have been called off from the view which he had been so much delighted with, in beholding the total overthrow of mystical Babylon, to hear the congratulations of the multitude in heaven, even the Church, who all took part in the triumph. He hears their hymn of praise, and the words of it. He hath recorded it also for the Church. It begins with the blessed word Alleluia, and it ends with the same. The Old Testament Church was remarkable for the use of this word. They generally began and ended all their hymns of praise with it. And to say the truth, it is very sweet. Praise is comely for the righteous.

But what I would yet more particularly desire the Reader to observe, in this triumphal song of the Church in heaven, is, that in it they recorded the faithfulness of God, in the destruction of Antichrist. There is no perfection of God, which the LORD all along commends to his people's notice and regard, more than his faithfulness. *Know now, saith the LORD by Moses, that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God!* Deut. vii. 9. And as it is to the

LORD's glory, when he confirms that faithfulness by his fulfilment of his promises; so is it to the credit of the LORD's people, when they as readily, and as cheerfully acknowledge it.

The Church, in the ruin of the whore, traced her mercies to this one source. God had from the first taught, that *no weapon formed against Israel should prosper*. Hence, when Rome turned all her weapons upon the Church, to destroy it, and the LORD did as he had said, and threw to the ground the whole power of the *Pope*; here was a lively proof of God's faithfulness. And the Church sung it, It is blessed to eye God and CHRIST in all things!

I desire the Reader to take notice of the strong language made use of by the Church in heaven, in calling this heresy the *great whore*. And I beg of him no less to regard what is said of the smoke of her furnace, (as if alluding to *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*;) which rose up for ever and ever. These are grand points.

Let me beg the Reader no less to remark also, what is said of God's judgments, in his judging the great whore, namely, that they are *true and righteous*. Her daring opposition to God's truth, her blasphemies and unjust traffic in selling pardons, which belong only to God to bestow, and her arrogating a right of supremacy in divine things, justly call for divine vengeance. Hence, therefore, her everlasting destruction forms a part, in the great system of what is true and righteous, in the LORD to accomplish. And in the same moment, it is a part of God's justice to shelter and protect all his faithful ones; it is a righteous thing with God to punish his and their enemies, and to repay him that hateth him to his face.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints:

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of

the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 ¶ And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

I beg the Reader to notice what is said here of a voice, which came out of the throne, saying, *praise our God all ye his servants*. Now the right apprehension of this voice will serve to throw a light upon what follows hereafter. That this voice could not be the voice of GOD the FATHER, SON, or SPIRIT, is, I think, very evident, for if it had, the words would not have been, *praise our God*, but *praise God*. The word *our* could not upon this occasion have been proper, since it is calling upon others to praise with the voice that called. Moreover, it should seem to have been a voice from among the multitude which sung *Alleluia*, consequently not the voice of GOD. Add to these things, when it is said, for *the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth*, this is plainly said of CHRIST, whose omnipotency hath been now proved in the destruction of the whore, and her total overthrow. And this hymn is but a continuation of the first hymn, at the opening of the chapter, and repeated again and again in those several verses, third and sixth. For whose is salvation but CHRIST? And to whom all along did *John* hear the hymn of salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, ascribed? Was it not to him, (said they,) that *hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood?* Chap. i. 5. v. 9.

So once more. What are all the ascriptions of honor which are said to be given to *him*, but to the Person of CHRIST, because that his marriage is come, and hence the gladness and rejoicing of his people? The very marriage is with CHRIST, who from everlasting betrothed his Church to himself from the FATHER's gift, and who, when from the time-state in the *Adam*-fall, hath restored her by redemption; he espouseth every individual to himself by regeneration, at their personal call, and here finally brings home his Church to the marriage supper in the Jerusalem church state in heaven. And with respect to the wife making herself ready, the following verse explains what is meant, when it is said, that to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, meaning, that the LORD, who provided the wedding garment of his righteousness, puts it on. So the Church, by the Prophet, sings: *He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels*. Isaiah lxi. 10.

And, lastly, to add no more, the whole of this account is closed up by the speaker, whoever it was, in those very remarkable words: *And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God*. Consequently, it could not be GOD or CHRIST, or the HOLY GHOST, but GOD's messenger, as upon, many instances before, we find *John* taught by one or another.

Now, from all these united considerations, nothing can be more plain, than that the words of the following verse is from the same speaker, an angel or messenger, and no more. And though *John*, for the time, in the glorious intelligence he had just received, was so transported, as *Cornelius* was in the case of *Peter*, that he fell down to worship him, yet plain enough it is, that this was from the Apostle's state of mind, and nothing else. And that neither *John* took it to be the Person of CHRIST that was speaking to him, is as certain; for otherwise he would not have said, I have the testimony of *Jesus*, if he had been *Jesus* himself.

I have been the more particular than, perhaps, ninety-nine in an hundred would have thought necessary; because some few persons, untaught of God the HOLY GHOST, and of a stamp disposed to doubt the GODHEAD of CHRIST, have thought this passage rather leans to that opinion. Than which, when attended to, in these striking particulars, nothing can be more foreign. Most evident it is, from beginning to end, that the whole of what we have gone over, hitherto, in this chapter, is an account *John* received from the ministry of a messenger or angel, and a blessed account it is, to the truth as it is in *JESUS*.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The word of God.

Here indeed we have CHRIST, as is most evident from his double names, *faithful and true*. His perfections also confirm the glories of his person, for *righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins*. Isaiah xi. 5. I admire what is said of the many crowns of the LORD JESUS. Who indeed can number them. He *hath* the essential crown of GODHEAD. He *hath* the Personal crown of the GOD-Man, which was, and is his native right, by virtue of that special character of his, and independent of any single act, by which he hath endeared himself to his people. He *hath* the Mediatorial crown, both of office and of work, from the infinite merit and dignity of his labors in redemption. And he *hath* the rightful crown put upon his sacred head, by every individual one of his people, for whom he hath wrought out and accomplished salvation. Oh! the blissful sight of beholding the LORD JESUS, thus wearing his many crowns, and especially when the poor sinner espies among the many, the very one which he had put upon CHRIST's head, when ascribing to him, as is most justly his due, the sole honor of every poor sinner's salvation.

I must beg the Reader to regard with me, the very great blessedness of the name here spoken of, which no man knew but he himself.

I do not presume to speak decidedly upon such a subject. Indeed, what is here said is enough, one should think, to deter any man, and every man, yea, every Angel of Light, from speaking on so mysterious a subject decidedly. For if no man knoweth this name of Jesus written, but he himself, how presumptuous must it be, in any to attempt the discovery. Reader! pause for the moment, and before you go further, ask yourself, whether any higher testimony can be desired, in proof of CHRIST'S GODHEAD. If none can know his name, who shall know his Person? Who shall declare his generation. Oh! how overwhelming is the testimony to a heart taught of God. Truly, dearest LORD, I behold a blessedness in thy words, used upon another occasion, which bring a peculiar strength of expression, when applied here upon this. *No man knoweth the SON, but the FATHER; neither knoweth any man the FATHER, save the SON, and he to whom the SON will reveal him.* Matt. xi. 27.

But we must not stop here. Though no man knoweth his name, but he himself, yet his name is subjoined, and it is called, The WORD of God. Reader! I do beseech you, ponder it well. We are accustomed to this name in the scripture. *John*, in the opening of his gospel, calls CHRIST by this very name, the WORD. But we learn here, that though the LORD is called by this name, no man hath, or can have, a full and clear apprehension of it. I am free to confess, that though I have for many a year past felt a satisfaction in my mind, that the peculiarity of the name, the WORD, belonging to the SON of God was intended to express, the infinite dignity of his Person; yet, here I rested and concluded, that this implied the whole, as in relation to his Person and dignity. I now behold in it somewhat more. And although this very scripture, which hath been made the means of awakening an increased apprehension in my mind, of its vast importance, while now reading of it, assures me, and in that assurance, satisfies me at the same time, that the full investigation of it baffles all human knowledge, yet I hope I shall never more read it, but with increased and increasing solemnity, and profound reverence of thought. Oh! what infinite sublimity, must there be in the name; The WORD of God! How infinitely great must He be, to whom it peculiarly and personally belongs. How inconceivably deep and secret must the very name be, who, when he came forth from the invisibility of JEHOVAH, to make known what revelations of God he hath made, and without whose coming, never could any have been known, still came in a name, that none knoweth but he himself? Precious LORD JESUS! thy name is indeed wonderful! Oh! for grace to be everlastingly contemplating what to all eternity can never be fully known, thou hast a name written, that no man knew but thou thyself; and thy name is called, the WORD of God.

One word more on this most precious scripture. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood!* I pray the Reader, to pause over this most interesting account of JESUS, and while he ponders the subject, look up with an eye of faith, and behold the LORD in this garment of redemption. Surely the design must have been most gracious. And it may well become every child of God, to search and seek out the cause of such a condescending revelation of himself, in thus appearing to his people.

It is blessed to eye CHRIST in every name, in every relation, in every office, and in every character. And it is doubly blessed, when the child of God knows him in all, enjoys him in all, and lives upon him in all. When in the council of peace before all worlds, CHRIST stood up at the call of his FATHER, the Head and Husband of his people, the Church was beheld in him, accepted in him, made holy in him, and one with him to all eternity, for all the purposes, council, will, and pleasure of JEHOVAH, which should hereafter take place, and in all the circumstances which should follow. CHRIST then stood forth as the Head and Husband of his Church, his spouse; *chosen in him, to be holy and without blame before God in love.* But when in the after time-state of the Church, at the fall of Adam, the Church became involved and implicated in that fall; the Church was then to know her Head and Husband in another endearing character, namely, her Redeemer and SAVIOR. So that from henceforth, redemption became another great and glorious subject, in the view of the Church; and CHRIST came home recommended and endeared to her affection, both as her Head and Husband, and her Redeemer and SAVIOR, the LORD her righteousness. The HOLY GHOST hath blessedly stated *both*, in that glorious scripture by Paul to the Colossians. *And he is the Head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the FATHER, that in him should all fulness dwell.* Then cometh the second glorious character of the LORD JESUS as Redeemer. *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.* Coloss. i. 18, 19, 20. Hence, we have here, the LORD JESUS CHRIST in his double relation to his Church, both as an Head and SAVIOR. *First*, as an Head in union, the beginning, and the first-born from the dead, as the founder of the future world, for which the Church hath from everlasting been designed, and by his resurrection, to which CHRIST hath begotten the Church. And, *secondly*, as a SAVIOR in redemption, having made peace to all the sins of his body the Church, by the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself. Reader! pause over the wonderful subject, and then again and again, look up and behold him, as John here beheld him, on his white horse, with his many crowns, (and, oh! if you can behold the crown of your own personal salvation, among the number, and in his vesture dipped in blood. Doth not JESUS seem to speak in this apparel. Doth he not seem to say, wherefore do I wear this but to convince my people of the everlasting efficacy of my blood? And do I not still appear in it, to convince them by such a palpable demonstration, that redemption-work is finished, and I am still clothed in my redemption-robcs, to tell my poor ones upon earth, this most assured truth, and to encourage them to come to me, under all their sins and sorrows, and temptations, with full assurance of faith. Reader! were not these among the causes for which CHRIST so appeared to John? And shall not his Church feel confidence from it, and look to Him as such, whose name is Faithful and True?

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed

him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Having looked at CHRIST, in those most glorious and soul-comforting views in which *John* beheld him, he now saw the armies which followed him ; and they were also seen on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. I venture to take for granted, that by the armies which were in heaven, is meant the Church, the LORD's redeemed ones. Their apparel seems to decide this. Not the angels of light. For though elect angels, and preserved by CHRIST in their holiness ; yet, as CHRIST is here peculiarly seen, from his vesture dipped in blood, as a Redeemer ; it should seem, that his followers were the redeemed. Moreover, they are called *armies* ; more, I should conceive, on account of their militant state, than in this place, of their number. For though the word *armies* implies many, and the LORD's hosts are a great multitude, which no man can number ; Rev. vii. 9. yet here the LORD himself is seen, as on his horse of battle, in righteousness, judging and making war ; and, consequently, those that follow him, of his armies, are in the field of action.

There is somewhat truly interesting and beautiful, in this description of the Church, in her militant state. They are, as their LORD is, beheld on white horses, to intimate their purity and holiness in CHRIST. They are going after him, and with him, to battle ; but not to an uncertain warfare, for He is crowned with the many crowns of victory, and they are clothed in white robes, to intimate, that they have already washed them white, in the blood of the LAMB. Moreover, they are going *after* CHRIST, not *before* CHRIST. This scripture saith, they *followed* him. So that every thing is in beautiful correspondence to the leading truths of our most holy faith. All is of Him, and *through* Him, and *by* Him. And if *we love Him, it is because he hath first loved us !*

But though we may, as we are called upon so to do, behold those armies in heaven following CHRIST, and for a moment glance them as they pass ; yet, the one only object to dwell upon in this lovely view, is Jesus himself ! And the further description given of Him in this scripture, must of necessity hide every other object from any thing more than the mere momentary attention. Reader ! do observe how blessedly *John* speaks of him, when he saith : *Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.* It is a grand feature of character in the LORD JESUS, that while coming forth for the salvation of his chosen, he cometh forth also, for the destruction of his, and

their enemies. He saith himself, by the spirit of prophecy, ages before his coming, while in the prospect of it; *the day of vengeance is in my heart; and the year of my redeemed is come.* Isaiah lxiii. 4. Habak. iii. 13. And it should be particularly remembered, in this scripture we are now upon, that it is for the destruction of the Antichristian powers, the East, and West heresies, as well as the whole works of Satan, and his kingdom, the LORD JESUS is here beheld, as coming forth clothed in armor. The terms used, of *a rod of iron*, and the smiting them with *the sword of his mouth*, are well known in scripture. Psm. ii. 9. And see John xviii. 6. with the note in the Commentary.

The treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, hath a double aspect; as it concerns the LORD's redeemed ones, and as it concerns the unregenerate. CHRIST, as his people's Surety, hath trodden *the wine-press alone*; and *of the people there was none with him.* Isaiah lxiii. 3. And who shall describe the weight, and pressure, on the Redeemer's soul, when he made himself an offering for sin, when he bore their sins, and carried their sorrows? But the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God hath respect also to the unregenerate; concerning whom the LORD JESUS saith: *For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments; and I will stain all my raiment.* Isaiah lxiii. 3. No doubt, the day, the awful day of our God, when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies, will be so awfully marked. Those Antichristian powers, both of the East, and West, the devil, and his whole host, yea, all the unregenerate, in every nation and clime, will be trodden by CHRIST, in the wine-press of God's vengeance; and when fully ripened in their iniquity, like the vintage of the vineyard, the LORD will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, stain all his raiment, and bring down their strength to the earth.

One sweet view more. JESUS hath another name on his vesture, and on his thigh, which all his redeemed cannot but delight to read, and know him by; namely, KING of kings, and LORD of lords. Yes! Reader! the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath this glorious title in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST; and specially and personally so, as God-Man Mediator. There can be nothing more sweet and refreshing to the Church of God, than the contemplation of this distinction of character, both as relating to the nature, and essence of the GODHEAD; and as relating to the personal glory, and dignity, of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. I have, in many parts of this humble work, this *Poor Man's Commentary*, dwelt upon both; as the several subjects leading to them, from the several parts of the holy scriptures, have presented them before us. But, as I am now drawing towards the close of the whole sacred volume, I would crave my Reader's indulgence once more, to drop a word or two on *both*. The longer I live, the more I am convinced, of the present awful, CHRIST-despising generation. And what more trembling times are at hand, I know not; but, from the complexion of things now before us, there appears a sad, sad prospect. Before the final overthrow of those antichristian powers, which this book of God clearly predicts, and of which, this very Chapter sounds the glorious triumph; we must expect, from those scriptures, as the last struggle of the

beast, and the false prophet, and the dragon, the most violent oppositions; yea, the *two witnesses* of our God and SAVIOR, are to lie dead, under their violence, in the great city of the whore, which spiritually is called *Sodom*, and *Egypt*, *three days and half*. Chap. xi. 7, 10. I hope, therefore, one short view more in relation to this glorious title of our glorious God, our SAVIOR, both as it belongs to him, as God, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST; and in his own personal, and Mediator-character, as God-Man, will neither be considered unnecessary, nor found unprofitable, under the Lord's teaching.

Of the divine unity, of one God in essence, the whole scriptures are full. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord*. Deut. vi. 4. All, and every part of revelation, confirms the glorious truth. There is, there can be but one God. For as all the divine attributes and perfections are, in the highest possible extent, illimitable, and immense; so of necessity, the Lord God Almighty, fills all space, and is Omnipresent, and of an Eternal ubiquity. So that, the very idea, of another God, is excluded; for this immensity, and this ubiquity, would be broken in upon. A thing impossible.

The scriptures of God, which declare this first and leading truth, do no less at the same time declare, the existence of this first, great, and eternal cause, as existing in a threefold character of Persons, known and distinguished by distinct names, as revealed to the Church: FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. They are called the HOLY THREE, which bear record in heaven; the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST; and these THREE are ONE. 1 John v. 7.

And here, before we go further, I would stop the Reader humbly to propose one short and plain question. Supposing that we had never received this testimony from the scriptures, and supposing, for the first time, that you, or I, were made acquainted with the revelation of the Being of God; should we not expect to find, that the nature of his Being and existence, when made known, would be in a way of perfect distinction, from all his creatures? I say, should we not be inclined to think, that when any discovery was made to us, concerning the nature, and Being of God, we should expect to find him to differ wholly from our own? Here then it is. The testimony of scripture on this grand point is, that the Lord JEHOVAH doth exist; in the eternity of his nature and Being, in a way totally distinct, and distinguished from, all his creatures; and that, in the nature and essence of the GODHEAD, there are three distinct personalities, of equal glory, power, wisdom, and existence; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. Reader! what a mercy is it, to every child of God, in relation to this great truth, that over and above this blessed scripture testimony, he hath a personal knowledge and apprehension of each glorious Person, in the revelations made to himself, in the FATHER's love, the SON's grace, and the HOLY GHOST's fellowship?

But, to return. The holy scriptures, which declare the unity of the divine essence, and the existence of the THREE PERSONS in that Unity, have as graciously condescended, and in a variety of parts in the divine word, to call each of them by the same distinction of character and title, to make known to the Church, their Oneness in Being, in honor, in dignity, worship, power, and, in short, all the glorious prerogatives of God. Hence also, in all the departments of

nature, providence, grace, and glory, we are taught, that each glorious Person hath taken part, and doth take part; and both in creation, redemption, sanctification, and all that concerns the Church, in the life that now is, or that which is to come; the whole Persons have come forward, and do come forward, to the Church in CHRIST in Him, as the only possible way, or channel of communication; to teach the Church, from whom jointly, and severally, their mercies flow; and to whom again, in and through CHRIST, their endless praises are to be returned, both here and hereafter. I stay not to quote, or even in this place to refer to the numerous scriptures which are express to this purpose in proof. In numberless parts of this work, I have already done it; and I hope, most plain and satisfactory to every one taught of God. I am only now bringing forward, once more, the blessed subject itself, before I conclude my *Poor Man's Commentary*.

Here, however, let the godly Reader pause again, and, as he reads his Bible, let him recollect, if he can, the very many sweet and gracious passages, the word of God abounds with, in proof of the Personality of the HOLY THREE in ONE. How often do we find them conversing together? Gen. i. 26. Isaiah vi. 8. John xvii. throughout. Isaiah xlix. throughout. John xii. 28. How often speaking of their delight in each other. Prov. viii. 22 to the end. Matt. iii. 17. John xvii. 23, 24. Rev. iii. 21. John v. 19, 20. John xvi. 15. These are precious things, and precious scriptures in the confirmation of them! Let the godly Reader be very cheery of them.

One word more. The several titles, honors, and dignities, by which the HOLY THREE in ONE are known in scripture, in common one with the other, are all so many further confirmations, and of the most blessed nature, to this divine doctrine. How often do we meet with ascriptions of praise, to each, and to all; as to the *blessed, and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords!* And to the *King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God*, is ascribed glory, both to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT. 1 Tim. i. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 13, 16. Compare 1 Pet. v. 11. with 2 ~~Pet. iii. 19.~~ and Jude 25. Compare Isaiah vi. 3. with Rev. iv. 8. and Rev. i. 4.

And the same we find personally offered to the Person of CHRIST, as Mediator; not only in this text before us, but in every part of the word of God. In this very book of Revelation, to go no further, we have many instances. Rev. v. 9 to the end. Chap. i. 5, 6. Chap. vii. Reader! look at both. Bless God the SPIRIT, for his gracious testimonies to the whole, in his word of truth; and pray for his teachings, to make the whole profitable.

17 ¶ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on

them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.

It is not easy to conjecture, who is meant by this Angel which *John* saw, standing in the sun. But he could be no other than a servant. For the sun is the emblem of CHRIST. And it could not be said, that CHRIST was standing in himself. I should conceive, that as he was calling to the fowls of heaven to come to the great supper of God, it might be even a very humble servant in the ministry; similar to what is said of the servants in the Gospel, sent out to call in the poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind, to the feast of the word of God. Luke xiv. 21. But be who it may, one thing is worth regarding. He is said to be standing in the sun. By which we may, without violence to the expression, interpret it, as standing in CHRIST and his righteousness. Mal. iv. 2. Here every Preacher of CHRIST stands. He is open like the sun; and he preacheth CHRIST, and CHRIST only. And his call of invitation to the supper, is not a call to ordinances, but to triumphs. Let the Reader remember, that this which is represented here, is the total overthrow of Pope and Prelate, Mahomet and Devil. Hence, the people of God are called upon to rejoice over them. It is called the supper of the great God, even JESUS; for these are *his* triumphs. He it was, who was just before seen by *John*, upon his white horse, with his many crowns, and in his vesture dipped in blood, and his armies following him to victory. Hence, therefore, as a mighty Conqueror, the battle being over, he makes a feast, like all Eastern Princes, for his nobles and princes of the provinces; that is, all CHRIST's redeemed family, whom he hath made kings and priests to God and the FATHER, and invites them to the supper; and where he displays the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent majesty, not many days, no, not an hundred and fourscore days, for these would soon expire, but through a whole eternity, where JESUS shall be glorified in his saints, and they made completely blessed in him, for ever and ever. Esther i. 3—5.

Let the Reader not forget, that it forms an interesting part in the whole plan of redemption, when CHRIST brings home his chosen, that he hath also a compleat triumph over his enemies. It is a grand conclusion to the whole. And the Church is so highly interested in it, that one of the Covenant promises, in the charter of grace, runs in these words: *when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.* Psm. xxxvii. 34. Oh! it is a blessed part in redemption, that Satan shall not only be brought down, but *bruised by the God of peace under our feet.* Rom. xvi. 20.

The battle at *Armageddon* will bring forth before the Church, the everlasting triumph of the Church over the whore and the false prophet; and, if any pagan powers, aided by the devil, are brought into this war, to fight against CHRIST; their destruction is sure. And in seeing their utter destruction; this in prophetic language is, to eat the flesh of kings and captains, of mighty men and horses, both bond and free, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make

war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain by the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

What a blessed scripture is here! So then at last the beast is caught, and the false prophet; and ere long the devil will be taken also. The HOLY GHOST had taught the Church to expect this, in relation to the whore. 2 Thess. ii. 8—12. And the Church of GOD will shout aloud, and say, in the language of the Church of old: *So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD, but let them that love him be, as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might.* Judges v. 31.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! the raptures, the joy, the unspeakable felicity, which will break out in heaven, when, like *John* in vision, the Church of GOD will hear in reality, that great voice, of much people, saying *Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the LORD our God!* The imagination of the human mind cannot conceive the triumphs of the Church, when the LORD shall bring home the redeemed of his people; and the LORD shall have avenged the blood of his servants at the hands of the great whore, who, for so many ages and generations, hath corrupted the earth with the multitude of her fornications!

Oh! ye Church of my GOD, ye followers of GOD, and the LAMB! who shall number up your mercies, or speak the endless felicity of your happy state, when safely brought home from all the exercises of sin and sorrow, and are called to the marriage supper of the LAMB! Ye servants of the LORD! see that ye are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, even the righteousness of saints, which is JESUS's robe of salvation! See that GOD, who provides it for you, puts it on. No other can gain admission to the table of the LORD, either here in grace, or hereafter in glory! Oh! for the being so clad, that all the redeemed of the LORD may exult in the language of the Church of old, and say: *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels!*

But, oh! for grace, to behold my God and SAVIOR as *John* saw him, riding on his white horse, in his glorious characters of faithful and true, and in righteousness judging, and making war. LORD! give me to see thee, with thy many crowns. And, oh! for that very one, which thou hast enabled me to put upon thy sacred head, when in the day thou madest me willing to be saved in thine own way, and the knee of my heart bowed before thee; and I cried out, Jesus hath redeemed me, and saved me, and washed me from all my sins, in his blood! LORD! let me daily behold thee, in thy vesture dipped in blood! let me daily read, and know thy name, the WORD of God. Let me, to the last moment of my life upon earth, till I fall before thy throne in glory, hail thee, my King, and my God; yea, King of kings, and Lord of lords! Oh! the day, the blissful, happy wedding day, when Jesus will take me home, and while the beast, and the false prophet fall to rise no more, but sink in the lake of fire; I shall, through sovereign grace, behold my God and SAVIOR as he is, and dwell with him for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

The Overthrow of Satan. The Devil is seized, and bound for a thousand Years. CHRIST's Reign with his Saints. Satan for a short Time loosed. The general Judgment. The Devil cast into the Lake of Fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet are. All cast into Hell, whose Names are not found written in the Book of Life.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

2 ¶ And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and sat a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season,

We have here the judgment of *Satan*, and his being chained for a thousand years. And from that prison, he is not to be loosed, until the thousand years are expired. I pray the Reader to observe the beautiful order of things, in this divine procedure. First, the beast, and the false prophet, were to be cast into hell. That we saw done, in the foregoing Chapter. Next comes *Satan's* imprisonment. And that is accomplished in the opening of this Chapter. But, though here spoken of as done, because in *John's* vision these things were so represented; yet the events have not yet been done. The beast still

reigns. The false prophet still exerciseth his delusion. And *Satan* never more artfully deceived, than he doth now, in the present hour. But these prophecies are to be accomplished in their due course. And here they are recorded in their proper order. And a beautiful, and blessed account it is, taken in one grand whole; and enough to warm the affections of God's redeemed ones, into an ardent love to the Person of *CHRIST*, when God the *HOLY GHOST* graciously becomes our Teacher. I beg the Reader's attention to it, in order,

First. Here is an Angel seen by *John*, coming down from heaven, with a key in his hand, and a chain. Now we cannot be at a loss to know who this is; it can be no other than the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*. For not only must it be Him, and can be no other, because all power is his in heaven and earth, and he hath *the keys of hell and death*. Rev. i. 18. but because the personal hatred the devil hath to *CHRIST*, and the opposition *Satan* hath made to *CHRIST* and his kingdom, renders it peculiarly suitable and proper, that he should have his punishment immediately from *CHRIST* himself.

Secondly. Here is the power of *CHRIST* manifested, in seizing the old serpent, and binding him, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and the time limited for his confinement.

Thirdly. Here is also an account of a time of liberation; for the devil when he shall be at liberty for a little season, and when, as it should seem, he shall again deceive the nations, though but shortly.

Now some have thought, that this confinement of *Satan* began, when *CHRIST* cast out the devil from the bodies of men, in the days of *CHRIST*'s flesh, and of consequence, the term is expired. And in proof of this opinion, they quote those scriptures, where it is said, that for this purpose, *the SON of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*. 1 John iii. 8. And *CHRIST* himself said, that he beheld *Satan, as lightning fall from heaven*. Luke x. 18, 19. But to these things it may be said, that the purpose of *CHRIST*'s coming, will be as fully answered by *Satan*'s destruction, when the time cometh, as to suppose it hath come. And very certain it is, from the days of *CHRIST*'s being upon earth to this hour, there hath never been a period of shortness, much less of a thousand years, in which the devil's influence on the minds of men, hath been restrained. And, moreover, as the imprisonment of the devil, according to the statement in this scripture prophecy, is to follow the burning alive of the beast and the false prophet, and not before these events, and as neither of these events have as yet taken place, it should seem, that there can be but little question, that the time of the devil's overthrow by *CHRIST*, is not yet arrived.

I shall take occasion in this place, to offer to the Reader, some few, and, I hope, not unprofitable observations, on this interesting subject of the war *Satan* hath waged with the *LORD JESUS CHRIST* and his people, and on scriptural authority. And I pray God the *HOLY GHOST*, that, from his divine teachings, I may be kept from advancing any one single point, but what is in perfect conformity to the word of God; and the Reader may be preserved from deriving any thing in those observations, but what shall be in strict consistency with God's truth, that both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* may be taught of God, and be mutually

blessed by them to the LORD's glory, and to our souls' furtherance in grace, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

In the prosecution of this service, I shall not think it necessary to go over the whole ground of enquiry concerning *Satan*, and the empire, which from the fall of men he hath established, and in cruelty exercised over the souls and bodies of men, more or less, in every individual instance of the children of *Adam*. This would be too extensive a subject. But I shall take the matter up from that part, which, unhappily for mankind, is too well confirmed, and too strongly proved to our sorrow, to be called in question. I mean, that there is this evil, and formidable foe to our nature, which *walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. 1 Pet. v. 8.

Our adorable LORD hath so very fully drawn the outlines, both of the Person and kingdom of *Satan*, in his ministry when upon earth, and the HOLY GHOST by his servants, both of the Old Testament and the New, have also so very largely set forth, the several horrible features belonging to both, that a reference to those scriptures, will supersede the necessity of advancing a single line, on these plain points. That there is this *Prince of the power of the air*, as he is called by the HOLY GHOST, which *worketh in the children of disobedience*, and that the Church, as well as the whole *Adam* race, had their spirits under his government by nature, is a truth not to be controverted. Ephes. ii. 2, 3. But the scripture is in a great measure if not altogether, silent, from whence this malignity of *Satan* to our nature arose, and wherefore this cursed and apostate spirit, hath taken up such a bitter and irreconcilable hatred to man.

Some great and distinguished men among the LORD's people, gathering into one focus, the several lights which here and there the word of GOD hath thrown forth upon this subject, have conceived that when the whole rays are centered, they do shine with sufficient clearness, to shew, that this malignity of hell first began, when at the fall of those apostate spirits, they took offence at the SON of GOD, betrothing the nature of man for a spouse for himself, at the call of GOD the FATHER, and not marrying the angelic nature. Their high intellectual powers could not stomach this choice. And therefore, rebellion brake out against the counsel and pleasure of the whole GODHEAD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. And, hence the quarrel with the SON of GOD became personal. *Satan* attempted to set up a kingdom in opposition to CHRIST's. Hence he began his malignant purposes upon the first man, made in CHRIST's image, in the garden of *Eden*. And, hence, the war hath continued ever since, and will remain during the whole time-state of the Church, and Satan's enmity to all eternity.

But be this as it may, very sure we are, that such a deadly foe we have, whose captives, both by original and by actual transgression we are, and under whose dominion we must have lain for ever, had not GOD our SAVIOR conquered him for us, and conquered him in us. And it is only by his victory that we are delivered from the *powers of darkness*, and translated into the kingdom of GOD's dear SON. It is the personal labors of the SON of GOD, which have accomplished all the purposes included in redemption; and though all the Persons of the GODHEAD have manifested the interest they take in this contest, yet the whole efficiency in the executive part of the work is in

CHRIST, and by CHRIST. CHRIST, in his own Person, hath subdued *Satan* for his people. And by his HOLY SPIRIT, he subdues him in his people. A few leading points on this most interesting of all subjects, will make this matter abundantly clear, and from the warrant and authority of scripture.

I began from that part, where the word of God begins; namely, *Satan's* ruining our nature in the instance of the first man in the garden of *Eden*. Here we date the origin of all the sins and sorrows of life. *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* So saith the scripture. And so saith common sense. For as in our first father, we all had an inheritance of holiness, had he kept it in which we were all by right interested: So by his loss of it, and the sin involved in that loss, we are, by right of inheritance, included. *Adam* did then, as many a worthless father doth now, by sin, spent his estate, and left his children beggars. But, Reader! by the way, do not fail to observe, that as by original sin, in a birth-right of nature we had no hand in, we are all implicated in *Adam's* sin and misery, so is it the mercy of the Church, that by the birth-right of grace to all God's people, we are all interested, and take part in CHRIST's righteousness and glory, in which we bore no hand. So sweetly saith the same scripture. *For as by one man's obedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 12 to the end. One caution I beg the Reader to take with him, as he makes application of these scriptures, I mean, that he sees the proof of his relationship, in the right of which the whole depends. Prove yourself my brother, by the birth-right of grace; a child of God, before you lay claim to the privileges of a child. For, as upon the supposition I had not sprung from the *first Adam*, so called, and none of his blood had ran through my veins, I certainly should not have been implicated either in his sin or his condemnation; so by a parity of reasoning, unless I can prove my relationship to the *second Adam* so called, I can lay no claim for an interest in his righteousness and justification. It is the relationship which makes out the right of both. Now both you and I too sadly prove we are sprung from the earthly *Adam* in nature. Can we as joyfully prove we are born of the heavenly *Adam* by grace? Sure we are, that we are by *generation* of the first man, which is of the earth, earthly. Are we as sure, that by *regeneration* we are of the second man, which is the LORD from heaven. I Cor. xv. 47.

It is truly blessed to observe, how graciously the SON of GOD, when coming into our world to destroy the works of the devil, took up both our cause and his own, and as the apostate spirit, dared to attack the LORD of Life and Glory, JESUS not only came to redeem his people from his power, but to destroy him, and 'root out every evil from his kingdom. The HOLY GHOST, in one sweet verse of scripture, sums up in a comprehensive manner the whole subject. *For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.* Heb. ii. 14, 15.

But it would be the subject of a volume, yea, many volumes, to go over the track of ground which the scriptures furnish, in shewing CHRIST's personal triumphs and victories over sin and Satan, death, hell, and the grave. What an huge account might be gathered, if only from that branch of the LORD's first open skirmishes with Satan, in his miracles, when dispossessing him from the bodies of men? And then again from the souls of his people?

That CHRIST was the glorious Person interested in this great event, of the destruction of Satan and his kingdom, is evident, from every consideration. For against CHRIST as God-Man, and his kingdom as his glory, the devil bent his whole malice. And hence, when CHRIST wrought his miracles, and especially in those miracles in which he cast out devils, JESUS made an appeal to those works, as so many demonstrations of his kingdom. *If I, said JESUS, cast out devils by the SPIRIT of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.* Matt. xii. 28.

The first, and greatest act of CHRIST's triumph over Satan, was on the cross. Here, most eminently might it be said, that, *through death, he destroyed him that had the power of death.* For the devil is said to have had the power of death, not from his appointing the time of any man's death, or having any power so to do, but because, by his introducing sin, he hath brought death into the world, which God hath appointed, as the unavoidable consequence of sin, and therefore, the devil is very properly said, on this account, to have been *a murderer from the beginning.* John viii. 44. Hence, CHRIST by his dying for sin, hath removed the cause of death for his people, in the everlasting effects of it. And as by his death and resurrection, he is said to have overcome death and the grave, so in those glorious acts, he here gave the first death-blow to Satan and all his cursed empire; and from the cross and the tomb, the first views of the everlasting mansions of the redeemed were then discovered. 2 Timothy i. 10.

The HOLY GHOST, by his servants the Prophets and Apostles, hath caused these victories of CHRIST to be loudly and joyfully celebrated. The LORD JESUS himself, speaking in the language of prophecy, thus delivered the blissful tidings ages before the event was to take place. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues. O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* Hosea xiii. 14. And the same is spoken of CHRIST by the Apostle, after the great triumph had been accomplished. *And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers (that is, those whom Paul elsewhere calls the rulers of the darkness of this world; see Ephes. vi. 11, 12.) he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* Coloss. ii. 13—15. Hence here the LORD JESUS began the first open display of his personal victory over Satan. And hence God the FATHER's gracious acknowledgment of the same, with the blessed consequence, which were first delivered by prophecy, and confirmed by the event. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured*

out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isaiah liii. 12. And in the prospect of this, just before the LORD JESUS entered the field of battle, he cried out; *Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* John xii. 31.

Secondly. After the SON of GOD had accomplished redemption-work, and was returned to glory, he sent down the HOLY GHOST for the carrying on this victory in the hearts of his people. It was not sufficient, in GOD's view, for CHRIST *personally* to conquer *Satan*, he shall be conquered by CHRIST *mystically*, yea, the poorest, the humblest, the feeblest, of the LORD's members, *in that day shall be as David* by his SPIRIT dwelling in them. Zech. xii. 8.

But while I begin this subject at this point, of CHRIST first personally triumphing over *Satan* on the cross, let not the Reader misapprehend, as though none of CHRIST's chosen were enabled by virtue of their union with CHRIST, to triumph over *Satan* in the LORD's strength before. This would be to mistake my meaning. Instances we have upon record, of old Testament saints, of *Job* and others, who in the strength of CHRIST, were borne up against the devil and his temptations, before CHRIST, at his incarnation, became manifested to destroy the works of the devil. But what I mean to say, and indeed what the word of GOD declares, is, that CHRIST in his own person conquered *Satan*, at his death, upon the cross, and CHRIST in his members conquers *Satan*, when at any time by the influences of His HOLY SPIRIT, he bears them up against his temptations.

Now it is blessed to behold CHRIST's triumphs over *Satan*, in every individual instance of his members, when, at regeneration, the LORD brings them out of his prison and sets their souls at liberty. Indeed, the LORD JESUS calls this work himself, the proof of his grace in the hearts of his people. For when JESUS sent *Paul* to preach the Gospel, his commission ran in these words, *I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Acts xxvi. 16—18.

And although the enemy, doth rally again and again, and endeavors to draw back to his prison-house the souls of those that was once led captive by him at his will; yet, blessed be GOD, there is *that*, in every truly regenerated soul, which in CHRIST's strength keeping them alive, (the LORD himself being their strength,) that enables the child of GOD to resist the devil stedfastly in the faith. And, if at any time the LORD, to shew them their own nothingness, and his all-sufficiency, permits the enemy, as in the case of *Job*, to come on more furiously, yet the end is, but for the greater glory of GOD, the greater good of his people, and the greater disgrace of *Satan*. Yea, even in those cases where, for the moment, the child of GOD falls, and is led away by the enemy, yet, even then like a captive, reluctantly obliged to march, he goeth on sullen and displeased. And when the grace of CHRIST recovers him, as *Peter* was recovered by

one look of JESUS, oh! how godly sorrow springs up in the soul afresh, and he cries out, *rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the LORD shall be a light unto me.* Micah vii. 8, 9.

Thirdly. But the victory of CHRIST, in his own Person, over Satan, and the triumphs of CHRIST in his members, during the time-state of the Church, are here followed by the tremendous one, the opening of this Chapter presents to us. The SON of GOD having thrown down *Pagan Rome*, *Papal Rome*, and the *false Prophet*, here seizeth upon Satan, the ringleader of all, and being now about at this period of his Church, to set up a visible kingdom in this world, and before the final day of judgment, he shuts up the devil for a thousand years, that he shall not, during that time, afflict the people of GOD, either with persecutions or temptations. What events will mark this æra of the Church, and to what extent the blessings of the LORD's people will reach, we have no further account, than that it will be a time of great ingathering to the LORD.

There will be, according to the predictions of scripture concerning it, the more immediate presence of GOD our SAVIOR in the midst of his people. *Ezekiel* speaking of it, said, that *the name of the city from that day, shall be JEHOVAH Shammah, the LORD is there.* Ezek. xlviii. 35. There will be a great pouring in of the LORD's people, gathered out of all nations. In allusion to this day, it should seem, is that scripture. *Thy people shall all be righteous.* Isaiah lx. 21. Not more righteous in themselves, for CHRIST is the righteousness of his people, but all of them shall be righteous in being brought home by the SPIRIT to CHRIST. There will be true spiritual ordinances, and a true spiritual ministry. *Pastors after God's heart, and watchmen that shall see eye to eye.* And the people shall have one heart and one way, and serve the LORD with one consent. Jerem. xxxii. 39. Jerem. iii. 15. Isaiah lii. 8.

Fourthly, and finally. The LORD JESUS will bring Satan, with all his hellish crew at the day of judgment, and completely execute his wrath upon him and them, by fixing them in eternal punishment in hell. This is read to us, verse 10. *And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* And let all the people say, Amen and Amen.

Reader! pause one moment more over the wonderful subject, and with me, bless GOD for the graciousness of those discoveries, concerning both the ruin of Anti-christ and the devil, and all his works. How little should we have known of these things, but for our LORD JESUS in these sweet records. How little do we even now meditate upon them, in a way equal to their vast importance. Think how the Church above, have been watching over these events, which have taken place below since their translation. Think how the spirits of just men made perfect in the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Martyrs, who died in the faith of CHRIST before the coming of CHRIST, when they beheld CHRIST combating with the devil, in the wilderness, and in the garden, and when by his death he overcame death and the devil, and by his blood paid their ransom, which GOD had trusted him for, and for which they were received into glory.

That those departed have an intimate knowledge of these things is certain, for we find them (Chapter vi. 10.) crying with a loud voice

for vengeance on their murderers, when God explained to them the reason, wherefore they were to wait a little season for the accomplishment of their wishes. And, therefore, how must they have looked on and beheld with holy joy, the LORD JESUS casting down the beast and the false prophet alive in the lake of fire, and chaining Satan for a thousand years in the bottomless pit. And, oh! what joy, what shouts of praise will burst forth from the whole army of heaven, when all the accursed crew, shall be finally sent together into everlasting perdition, and their sentence and execution be in the full view of the congregated world of angels and of men.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 ¶ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 ¶ Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The LORD JESUS promised his people by *John*, that they should set with him upon his throne. Chap. iii. 21. And here is the accomplishment. His people are said to be made kings and priests, to God and the FATHER. And agreeably to this, we find them in their regal and priestly office. Various have been the opinions of the LORD's people on this reign of CHRIST. Some have considered it spiritually. Others have supposed it is to be taken *literally*; and that CHRIST will reign with his saints upon earth; otherwise say they, wherefore is *Satan* bound up. He needed not a chain to keep him out of heaven. Rev. v. 10. But the HOLY GHOST hath left an obscurity upon it, and therefore I shall offer no observations of mine upon it.

But whether this reign with CHRIST be a spiritual reign, or whether it is to be literally on the earth, what is said of the *rest of the dead*, even the dead sinners, *twice dead* as *Jude* calls them, dead in soul in the original *Adam-fall*-apostacy, and dead in body, gone down to the chambers of the grave, all of this description lived not during the thousand years of CHRIST's reign with his saints, and the thousand years imprisonment of *Satan*! They will remain, as they were found at death, until the general judgment.

In relation to the *first resurrection*, it should seem to be intended, precisely as the words are. For, as many of the bodies of the saints

arose, to celebrate CHRIST's resurrection, so it may be supposed, many also shall arise to celebrate his reign with his saints at his *descention*. And very blessed it is, to consider the subject in this view. For when God's children have passed the present time-state of the Church, and their spirits have joined the society of the spirits of just men made perfect, they are then brought into clear apprehensions of the LORD's dealings in the great administration of all things. And wherefore may they not be supposed as raised up in their bodies during this thousand years of CHRIST as well as *Enoch* and *Elijah*, who never died at all. God hath immense discoveries to make, through a never-ending eternity of himself, in his threefold character of Persons, in, and through CHRIST, to his Church and people. And, there doth not seem a single cause of objection to his raising such, and such of his redeemed ones as he shall please, to begin in the union of soul and body, to enter into the joy of their LORD.

When it is added, that he is *blessed and holy that hath part in the first resurrection*, if it be considered as referring to a resurrection in grace, no doubt, as all the other parts of scripture declare, the second death can have no power upon them, for they are no longer subject to a spiritual death, being *made partakers of the divine nature*. 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. But I confess that I am more inclined to believe, that the blessedness and holiness here spoken of, hath respect to the first resurrection just before taken notice of, and is in my view a confirmation, that at this thousand years' reign of CHRIST, there shall be a resurrection of such, as the LORD hath appointed to meet the LORD at his government. The thought is pleasing, and I see no objection to it. But here, as in every other instance of doubt, I beg to be considered as never speaking at all decidedly.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

8 ¶ And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 ¶ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The loosing of *Satan*, and the deceiving of *Gog* and *Magog*, and the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, opens a new face of things. It cannot mean either the Pope, or false Prophet, for they and all their followers, will a long time before this, have been lost in remembrance from the earth. It is our mercy,

however, that the whole is of short duration. *A little season*, it is said in verse 3. And then follows the everlasting overthrow, and perdition of the devil.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 ¶ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Here we arrive to that great day of God, so long, so faithfully foretold, and now so solemnly introduced, with every thing that may strike the mind in the contemplation of it. *First*, it begins with the sight of *a great white throne*. It is a *great* throne, for the Lord Jesus, the judge of quick and dead, who sits on it, is the great and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And it is a *white* throne, to intimate, perhaps, the justice and equity of his administration. And, oh! how great and glorious, and holy, and pure must he be that sits on it, before whom, the earth and the heaven fled away; for *the heavens are not clean in his sight*.

John proceeds. *And I saw the dead small and great stand before God*. Reader! think how solemn the moment, how interesting the event, involved in that day's decision! These must be the dead spoken of before, who lived not during the thousand years of CHRIST's reign, verse 5. Not the dead now or then, *dead in trespasses and sins* only, but the twice dead, dead in soul, and dead in body, and now raised up to judgment. *The books opened*, is spoken of after the manner of men. But the sense is, it should seem, that of the wretched dead, who died out of CHRIST, who trusted to equity and not grace, those books, meaning God's knowledge and their own consciences, could not fail of bringing them in guilty before God.

Sea, death, and hell giving up their dead, evidently proclaims the side on which those characters all stand. And their being all judged according to their works, most plainly shew the same. The salvation

of God's people is not noticed in this judgment; and, consequently, the dead in CHRIST, in sea or land, are not here spoken of. For all that are noticed, are those whose names are not written in the Book of Life. This record is the only security, and a blessed and sure one indeed it is of the Lord's people.

I beg the Reader to notice with me, that nothing is said of the trial of the faithful. Indeed their trial hath taken place long before, when passing under the sentence of a broken law, they fled for refuge to the hope that was before them in CHRIST. It is said, indeed, and blessedly said, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST.* 2 Cor. v. 10. But this not for trial, but for the Lord's blessing. *There is no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS.* Romans viii. 1. And if there be no condemnation now, there will be no trial then. If the law be answered, as it hath been answered by JESUS our surety here, nothing can be brought forth to criminate there.

Reader! pause over this statement, and look at it every way, and examine whether it be strictly scriptural.

It is a grand, a momentous concern! If a child of God be truly and savingly called, is awakened, regenerated, justified in CHRIST JESUS, and made one with CHRIST, can there be any doubt or suspense as to the state in which he will appear before God? Will not CHRIST and his salvation be the same in death as they are in life; and will not his acceptance in the Beloved, be as sure in heaven, as it is here on earth. Could *Paul*, could *Peter*, could all the saints of God in the Old Testament and the New, talk with so much assurance of everlasting happiness in CHRIST, and by CHRIST, had a doubt remained of their interest in CHRIST, and their union with CHRIST? I pray the Reader, if his ground work of assurance be not founded on the same bottom, to see to it on what other footing his faith rests. If the prospect of that day of God be blessed, and the hope of it a joy unspeakable and full of glory, here is the strength of it in JESUS. And the assurance of our acceptance in CHRIST now, must remove the possibility of failure then. Sweetly doth the Apostle sing to this note, when he saith, *for whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified. And if so, what shall separate from the love of CHRIST.*

Reader! beg of God the SPIRIT to be your Teacher! Bring this subject daily before the Lord. See to it, that nothing satisfieth your mind, until the Lord himself hath given you an answer of peace. And let every day find some portion or other of it, engaged in your soul's desire in *looking for, and hasting unto* this great day of God. And, oh! the unspeakable mercy, to be always on the look out for JESUS, without suspense, without doubt, without fear, but in a fulness of joy, having redemption in his blood, waiting his coming, when CHRIST will own you before the congregated world, as his own, and *present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

REFLECTIONS.

Oh! the unspeakable joy, the Church, both in heaven and earth, must feel, in CHRIST's triumphs over the devil! What a glorious

sight, even in contemplation, to behold CHRIST coming down from heaven, and seizing upon the monster, to cast him into the bottomless pit, where hell and horror reigns.

Praises to our All-conquering JESUS, for shutting him up, during his thousand years' reign with his saints, that their joy shall have no interruption. And blessed be his holy Name, that he will raise up his saints and faithful ones, to sit on thrones with him, during this blissful age, of light, and life, and glory. Nothing of sin, nothing of sorrow, shall interrupt this blessed *Millennium*. And JESUS will have the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and the word of GOD, and that have not worshipped the beast, but hated the whore; to reign with him. Oh! the felicity of beholding JESUS, and the glory of his Person, and the love of his heart, to his redeemed, his people!

They are indeed blessed, and holy, who have part in the first resurrection. GOD the HOLY GHOST hath said it. And, my soul, beg the LORD to seal the everlasting remembrance of it, in thy inmost affections. On such, the second death hath no power!

And while thy Church, O LORD, are rejoicing with holy triumph, over the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, in beholding them for ever cast into the lake of endless torment; oh! for grace, in a life of faith on the SON of GOD, to be waiting for that great day of the LORD, when JESUS will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Then will JESUS say to all his redeemed: *Come ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.* LORD! shall this be my happy portion? Will JESUS so own me, when he cometh to make up his jewels? Oh! for the LORD to bless my soul now with grace; and sure I am, that then the LORD will give me glory.

CH A P. XXI.

CONTENTS.

John in Vision is led to see the New Jerusalem. He beholds CHRIST upon his Throne. A Description of the Holy City. The LORD's Presence, the everlasting Glory of the Place. None can enter into it, but they whose Names are in the Book of Life.

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be

his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Whether what is here said hath respect to the Church, during the thousand years' reign of CHRIST with his saints, or whether after the day of general judgment, is not so clearly said, as to determine positively. But the felicity here described, cannot but make every child of GOD to be longing for such a blessed time, when nothing shall any longer interrupt the joy of the LORD's people. *Paul*, when comforting the Church, under the various dissatisfactions arising from every thing here below, points to this blessed time, and sums up the whole account in those precious soul-reviving expressions. *So shall we ever be with the LORD. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words!* 1 Thess. iv. 18.

If I might venture to give my present views of the subject, I would say, that both this, and the succeeding Chapter, are more directed to shew the blessedness of the Church in the thousand years' reign of CHRIST and his people, than touching upon that eternal state, which is to follow. The Prophet *Isaiah* was directed by the HOLY GHOST, to tell the Church of the *new heavens, and the new earth, the LORD would create*; and all the blessed consequences which should follow. *Isaiah* lxxv. 17 to the end. And, in another of his Chapters the Prophet gives a very similar description of the Church to what *John* saw in vision, as recorded in this Chapter. Compare *Isaiah* lx. throughout. All which correspond to the Church on earth.

And, when we consider what follows, of the tabernacle of GOD dwelling with men, and being with them; we certainly cannot be said to do violence to the scripture, even if interpreted with an eye to the change wrought by grace in the LORD's people, when called from darkness to light. *Old things are then passed away, and all things are become new.* 2 Cor. v. 17.

But what seems most decidedly to favor the opinion, that it is the Church in CHRIST's reigning with his saints, which *John* saw, and is here described, is because this Church is said to come down from heaven, and descends of course on the earth; which would not have been so expressed, one should think, if the eternal state of the Church in glory, were intended; for that is uniformly spoken of through all the scripture, as being in heaven.

The holy city, which *John* saw coming down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, gives a very blessed idea of the felicities in this reign of CHRIST. But it opens also to a subject connected with it, of a very sweet and spiritual nature. I will beg the indulgence of the Reader to touch upon it. I am free to confess, that, however it might be more gratifying to the generality of Readers, to enter upon a description of what is here said, concerning the glories of this New Jerusalem; I do not feel competent to it. Neither do I consider it can be profitable; for if it had, the HOLY GHOST would have done it to our hands. It is sufficient, it should seem, to that blessed SPIRIT, to state the fact; but no further. The LORD means, in all things, to glorify JESUS, and not to gratify curiosity.

But in the sweet and precious subject, in what is here said, of the tabernacle of GOD being with men, and dwelling with them; here we

have a discourse, of the most gracious, the most blessed, yea, of the most glorious nature. Allow me to state some few of the many delightful things contained in it.

And, *first*. The tabernacling of the SON of GOD in our nature, I mean, in taking what he did in that holy, pure, and perfect portion of humanity, hath been, and ever must be, a subject of everlasting wonder, love, and praise. But that the SON of GOD should make choice; as he hath done, in every instance, more or less, of his redeemed to come in, and dwell in an heart inhabited before by Satan, and a cage of unclean birds; here the astonishment ariseth yet higher.

Secondly. The design of the LORD in this dispensation is to demonstrate his love, and the exceeding riches of his grace, in these wonderful acts of our GOD. While the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him, and the heavens are not clean in his sight; the LORD chooseth the heart of a sinner for his residence. Now, Reader! observe, among a thousand things in it, which must for ever excite wonder, and shew that his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither his ways our ways; here is one sweet cause for such an act of unequalled grace, as must for ever endear the LORD to the heart of his people; namely, it is the only way, whereby he should shew to us, his peerless mercy. For, supposing GOD hath first made us holy; yea, supposing he had so ordered, that we had never sinned; but having made us what we might have thought holy tabernacles in his people for his residence, and taken us to heaven at once; we should indeed have had to have loved him for his love; admired him for his wisdom, and praised him for his power; but then we should have lost, yea, never known one sweet and precious attribute of our GOD, namely, his mercy. Whereas the scripture most sweetly, and blessedly teacheth us, that *the LORD delighteth in mercy*. Micah vii. 18. And how, or by what means, could the LORD shew forth his delight in the exercise of it, but upon objects of misery? Well, then, if the LORD delighteth in mercy, and the LORD delighteth to be known by those he loves, in the free, and full, and everlasting exercise of mercy, he must find objects to shew it upon. So then, saith the LORD, it shall be. If those I have loved, with an everlasting love, and chosen to be holy and without blame before me in love in my dear SON, fall into sin and misery, I will magnify my free, and sovereign mercy, in bringing them out of it; and this shall be the way, by redemption in his blood, that I will cause my mercy to shine to the utmost. And thus the scripture speaks concerning it. GOD, *who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST*. Ephes. ii. 5. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace*. Ephes. i. 7.

Thirdly. But what still tends to heighten the mercy more is, that GOD most evidently manifests all along, that there is nothing in the objects of his love, from first to last, that hath the least concern in this transaction. It is not their misery, that first awakened his love and mercy; for both were in exercise, not only before they had done either good or evil, but even before they had any being. These plans of GOD, were before sin, before sorrow, before the world was formed. The LORD laid his foundation deep and low, to bring about

the purposes of his will; and, therefore, in the vast contrivance, the LORD gave scope for the exercise of all these attributes, wisdom, love, and power; and mercy to be brought forth into the fullest display of its riches, when the sin of his people rendered it so necessary. Reader! pause over this view of the subject; for, according to my apprehension of it, nothing can be more sweet, and precious. Your misery, and my misery, by reason of our sins, are not the cause of God's mercy; for neither our deservings, or undeservings, are at all considered as motives with the LORD for the display of his grace: (for if this had been the case, it would cease to be grace.) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, takes occasion, from our misery, to make known his mercy, yea, and the fulness of it also in his dear Son. He, therefore, displays his grace, the riches of his grace, yea, the exceeding riches of his grace, in such a way, and manner, as shall magnify the glories of his name, in bestowing the aboundings of his mercy, to overwhelm, and do away the aboundings of sin, that *where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound; and as sin hath reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* Rom. v. 20, 21.

Fourthly. One of the sweetest feelings of the soul also, under these gracious workings of grace from the LORD, ariseth out of it; namely, that in the ebbings and flowings of the mind, when visited by those high tides of God's love and mercy, his tabernacling with his people, and his manifestations, that he is at home in his dwelling, is when their emptiness, and brokenness of heart, makes his presence so seasonably great, and refreshing. Our hearts are often like empty walls, and blessed it is to be so. For when we have nothing, and are nothing, yea, worse than nothing, stripped of all, no chair to sit on, not a table to eat upon, nothing, yea, nothing to put upon it, no purse, no scrip, nor money in our purse, with souls sinking, and hearts fainting, and brought down to the very floor of sorrow; then, to behold the LORD coming in, with love in his heart, and a fulness of grace in his hands; and supplying all we need, in himself, and from himself, in his rich bounty: oh! the blessedness of all this? Oh! who would not wish to be emptied of every thing, and all our trumpery furniture tumbled into the street, that CHRIST may come in, take possession of our whole souls, and be our God, our all, and our portion for ever!

Lastly, to add no more. Our God must be glorified, and our God must have all the glory. In nature, in providence, in grace, in glory, creatures can add nothing, can bring nothing, can offer nothing. Yea, our very praises for CHRIST, and all the benefits with CHRIST, can add nothing to God's glory. His glory is *in* himself. His glory is *from* himself, *to* himself. As we brought nothing to our first creation in nature; so neither can we bring any thing to our new creation in grace. *If the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; it is all of pure, free, sovereign love, and grace.* And as God declares, that he hath chosen a broken, and a contrite heart, for his throne; certainly it is his own free choice, and for his own glory, that He is thus pleased to make it so. And blessed be the LORD, for such revelations of his will and pleasure; for now I find, that my nothingness, and emptiness, are exactly suited for his

fulness, and all-sufficiency. LORD! drive every buyer and seller from thy temple, even my poor soul; and make it thy fee-simple, and inheritance, as it is justly thine both by creation and redemption, thine for ever!

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Reader! let us pause over this verse, for it is a refreshing one. What a happy climate this must be? Contrast it to the present state. Then look to JESUS, who hath purchased for us such vast mercies. Depend upon it, there is more of JESUS, even in the least of our common blessings, than we are aware of. The thorns of this world, are all the inheritance which sin left us. Therefore, whenever a thorn is taken out, whenever any ease or mitigation to sorrow is found, it is JESUS who is the purchaser of those blessings. How little is this thought of by men? I do not mean men of the world, for how shall carnal, unawakened men think of JESUS, who know not themselves? But I am speaking of the LORD's people. And yet, what a double sweetness would this thought, when coming warm to the mind, put into the enjoyment of every blessing? This is the fruit, and effect of JESUS's love. I wish any child of GOD, that reads this short observation when I am no more, may, through grace, feel his heart led out to the consideration of it. All blessings, all mercies, are the fruits and effects of JESUS's love; and very blessed it is to eye JESUS in them. I make a nice distinction between the most precious blessing; and JESUS himself, the Giver of that blessing. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to receive the gifts of JESUS as his gifts. But it is a thousand times more blessed, to know, and enjoy JESUS himself, in those gifts, as the love-tokens of his heart, from whence they come. To love him is blessed, but to be beloved by him in infinitely more blessed. *This* is the cause, the *other* is the effect. He it is, it is said, that will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people. This is blessed. But wherefore he doth it, is more so. Because he loves them; and they are beloved by him. This is the coronet of the whole. This the head of all blessedness.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,

Though these distinctions of character, belong in common to all the Persons of the GODHEAD, (Isaiah xliii. 10. Isaiah xliv. 6, 8.) yet I should humbly conceive, that in this place CHRIST is the Speaker; because in this *Millennium* state of the Church, it is CHRIST reign-

ing with his saints. And how very delightful are those declarations to his redeemed? Reader! do you know CHRIST, under these precious characters? Doth JESUS sit upon the throne of your heart? Hath he there made all things new? Hath he taken away the heart of stone, and given you an heart of flesh? Are your desires, your affections, your appetites, become new, and spiritual? Is he indeed, the *Alpha*, and the *Omega*, in your creed? If the LORD hath created your heart anew, sure I am, you must have made him the *Alpha* of this great work; for creating work, you cannot then but know to be his. But do you know him as the *Omega* too; that is, the Finisher, as well as the Beginner of salvation? If creating-work be his, so is renewing-work, confirming-work, strengthening-work, recovering after backslidings, and raising up again after falls. Do you know the LORD JESUS under all? Then do you make him what GOD the FATHER had made him, and what he here declares himself to be, the *Alpha* and *Omega*; the beginning and the end. Oh! it is blessed, as we begin, so to go on, upon a free grace bottom. This is a tried way, a sure way, yea, *the good old way*, which, when a child of GOD walks in it, he finds rest to his soul. But to halve it with CHRIST, is robbing CHRIST of his glory, and the soul of happiness. Jerem. vi. 16.

Reader! listen to what JESUS saith, in the close of this scripture. *I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely!* What! is there no qualification needed beside? No! if CHRIST be welcome to the thirsty soul, that soul is welcome to CHRIST. Observe, it is a *gift*, not a *purchase*. It is bestowed upon the *thirsty*, not the *full*. Could a poor sinner but see this, he would discover, that the only qualification, is a sense of want, and a view of the LORD's goodness to supply. Hence the ignorance of this is the sad cause of all our misery. And JESUS taught this, to the woman of *Samaria*. She was ignorant that CHRIST was the gift of GOD. And to that ignorance, the LORD ascribed the cause, wherefore she asked not for living water from CHRIST. It is blessed to feel our want, blessed to know where alone is the supply of that want, and blessed to see GOD the FATHER's gift in the provision, and blessed when GOD the SPIRIT leads to CHRIST, for the mercy. See John iv. 42. and Commentary.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Our LORD, within the compass of these two verses, hath marked the striking difference between his people, and the ungodly. Oh! who shall describe the properties of grace? What heart hath ever entered into the *Arcana* of the divine counsels? In the mass of Adam-nature here are some, whom the LORD calls his children, his

jewels, his chosen; adopting them into his family, acknowledging himself to be their God, and they his people. And here are others, whose nature, void of grace, are manifested to be in the fearful state of servile bondsmen to Satan, whose portion is with Satan for ever, in the lake which burneth with fire. *This is the second death*; meaning an everlasting separation from the presence of God and the LAMB.—Reader! pause over the solemn view. And, if so be, God hath granted you the quickenings of His HOLY SPIRIT, on whom the second death hath no power; look up with me, and cry out, in words similar to the astonished Apostle: LORD! *how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto us, and not unto the world?* John xiv.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

Reader! let you and I bless God, for this precious discovery, made to *John*, for the Church's joy, of the Bride, the LAMB's Wife. Here is represented, under the similitude of a temple, (Psm. cxliv. 12.) the whole body of CHRIST, the Church; even every individual, which was given to him by the FATHER, and betrothed by him before all worlds, and now, through sovereign grace, are brought home to that glory, which was from all eternity the first in God's designs, and now finished, in his final decree, according to his eternal purpose. The invitation the angel gave to *John*, methinks, I would humbly hope, is given to all the companions of *John*; (Rev. i. 9.) and, therefore, by faith, I would accept the invitation; *Come up hither, and behold the LAMB's Wife!*

What a sweet thought it is, that when God the FATHER first presented the Church to his dear SON, before all worlds; she was then beheld by CHRIST, as she really was, in all that beauty, and glory, in which God presented her, and as she stood before him in his divine mind, *holy and without blame before him in love*. Ephes. i. 4. And though, in this time-state of the Church, she is sunk into such sin and misery, that all her features are changed; yet, I say, it is a blessed thought, that she was not so at the first, neither is she to be so at the last, and for ever. And, therefore, God's first, and original design, must be accomplished. She shall be before him holy, and without blame in love. This Church then, this King's daughter, (Psm. xlv. 18.) it should be remembered, hath lost nothing of her relationship by sin. A King's daughter she still was, and is, during the

whole of this time-state. And a King's daughter, and a King's Wife, she will remain, to all eternity. Sin destroys not this affinity. All the water of the sea, cannot wash away the relationship. In this betrothing, and union, CHRIST received her at the hands of his FATHER; and she became the object of his desire then, and must, and will remain so, to all eternity.

Well but, say you, she hath fallen into foul dishonor, shame, and misery, since. Yes! she hath. But that did not alienate the affections of her Husband from her. For these are his own words to her. *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again unto me, saith the LORD.* Jerem. iii. 1. And, since nothing but his own grace, put into her heart, would bring her back; that grace the LORD hath given her, and made her *willing in the day of his power.* Hence, this state of sin and misery, afforded a blessed opportunity, for the display of his love. And JESUS came into this our world, in quest of her, he died for her, shed his blood for her, and washed her from all her sins in his blood; and, having clothed her with the robe of his own righteousness, she is now more beautiful than ever, and he hath presented her to himself, *a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but is holy and without blemish.* Ephes. v. 27.

It is impossible for the imagination to form to itself any thing more blessed, than the contemplation of CHRIST, and his Church, in the manner, and way, the Angel described it to *John*. In the opening of this Chapter, he saw in a vision, the Church coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; but this view was in one mass. Here the Angel brought *John* to a nearer, and more distinct apprehension. The Church is here said to have had upon her *the glory of God.* And *John's* mind seems to have been somewhat in the frame that *Paul's* was, when caught up to the third heaven. 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

I do not presume to enter into the full extent of what is here meant by the expression of having *the glory of God.* But as I am inclined to think, that what is here said of the Church, during the *thousand years' reign of CHRIST*, relates to those, who are said to be blessed and holy, in having part in the *first resurrection*; and of consequence form part of this Church; the glory of God is upon them, both in body and soul. It should seem, that this thousand years' reign is intended for some great and special purposes, in relation to the LORD's kingdom. And as such, those who constitute the Kings and Priests of our God in that assembly, will be in a state of perfection, as well in body as soul; and, therefore, will be under the continual manifestations of *the glory of God.* And, if the *Shekinah* was frequently in the Church in the Wilderness, and *Moses* was admitted into a more familiar manner than others, to behold the glory of the LORD, until the skin of his face shone, from the reflected brightness; it should seem, that no objection can be supposed to arise, for the saints of God, in this *Millennium-state*, to be brought under such displays of glory, in the prospect also, of the near approach to the eternal kingdom. But I speak only presumptively.

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and

names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel :

13 On the east three gates ; on the north three gates ; on the south three gates ; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth : and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper ; and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper ; the second, sapphire ; the third, a chalcedony ; the fourth, an emerald ;

20 The fifth, sardonix ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, crysolite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh, a jacinth ; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl ; and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it,

23 ¶ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

I do not think it necessary, in a work of this kind, to attempt what I freely confess, I am not competent to perform, an analysis of what *John* hath said, of the gates, and precious stones of this building. They may, for ought I know, have an allusion to the gifts and graces of the HOLY SPIRIT, in their different qualities and colors. But of this I am not sure. And, as the HOLY GHOST hath not thought proper to explain, I dare not offer conjectures. In relation to the *walls*, we may venture to speak with more confidence, for CHRIST himself is both the foundation of Zion, and his salvation God hath appointed for walls and bulwarks. And CHRIST is the only gate; or way, for an entrance into the Church below, or above. *Isaiah* xxviii. 16. *1 Pet.* ii. 4, 5. *Isaiah* xxvi. 1. *John* xiv. 6. But, though I do not venture on an explanation of these several verses, of the building, and precious stones, here mentioned; I would beg to propose a short remark on what is said, of this city needing not the light of sun, or moon, because the glory of God doth lighten it, and the LAMB is the light thereof. There is somewhat in it most blessed. The LORD help us, in some measure, suited to our present capacities to understand it.

And, *first*. Though I can form no one idea whatever, in relation to the *essential* glory of God, as God; yet, I think, we may derive some apprehensions from what scripture hath said, in relation to the glory of the God-man CHRIST JESUS. We have several striking accounts of the sight the Elders of Israel and others had of seeing the God of Israel, in the Old Testament scripture, to which I might refer; see *Exod.* xxiv. 10. *Isaiah* vi. 1—4. But if we come down to New Testament times, we shall find somewhat more suited to our capacities to lean upon. The Apostle's view of CHRIST's Transfiguration in the Mount; *Stephen's* sight of CHRIST before the Jewish Council; or *Paul's* view of the LORD in the road to *Damascus*: These furnish out sufficient subjects for enquiry on this ground.

The Apostle's account of the Transfiguration is, that CHRIST's *face did shine as the sun*. Now the LORD JESUS, when preparing the minds of those men for this glorious sight, some days before it took place, told them, that there were *some standing there, which should not see death, till they had seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom*. *Matt.* xvii. 1. *Mark* ix. 1—8. Now I beg the Reader to observe, from CHRIST's words, that the glory which he was then proposing to display before them, was intended by CHRIST to represent somewhat, though imperfectly, of the glory he would appear in, *in his kingdom*. This I think highly important to be kept in view, in our humble enquiry concerning the light the LAMB is, in the New Jerusalem, which supersedes, and renders unnecessary, the light of sun or moon.

Secondly. Both the Apostles *John* and *Peter*, who have given their testimony to this transaction, as well as the Evangelists who have recorded it, tell the Church, that this glory of CHRIST was

abundantly great, and overpowering. *John's* account is: *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.* John i. 14. And *Peter*, speaking of it, saith: *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from GOD the FATHER honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent Glory: This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased.* 2 Pet. i. 16. And the Evangelist *Matthew's* account is, that *his face did shine as the sun.* Matt. xvii. 2. *Paul's* statement of the *Damascus* scene is, that it exceeded the sun. *I saw from heaven (saith he) a light above the brightness of the sun.* Acts xxvi. 13.

Thirdly. We shall have a yet stronger matter to help us in our discovery, concerning this glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the glory in which he will appear, (only infinitely increased,) in his kingdom of the New *Jerusalem*-state; if we call into our remembrance what is said of the two men which appeared with him, at the Transfiguration; *Moses* and *Elias*. They are said to have been talking with JESUS. And they are moreover said to have appeared in glory; that is, I venture to apprehend, in their glorified bodies. *Elias* could not have appeared any other way, for he did not pass through the grave to glory. And of the burial-place of *Moses*, no one ever knew. Hence, therefore, it is but a fair conclusion, that they both appeared in their bodies. And somewhat must have told *Peter* who they were; for it seems plain enough, that he knew them. See Luke ix. 30, 31. Is it not, therefore, a probable conclusion, that the LORD JESUS's glory, upon this occasion, was the same, only in a lesser degree, because, had it been more, the three Apostles then in the body, could not have borne it; and, that both *Moses* and *Elias* were, as those saints of GOD shall be, who are to reign with CHRIST, in his thousand years' kingdom?

Fourthly. From these considerations, we shall now, through grace, be enabled to form some conclusions, how glorious will be the human nature of CHRIST, in that kingdom, from the indwelling GODHEAD. Here is the source, and hence, as this is one and the same as the Essential GODHEAD, though dwelling bodily in CHRIST, it may serve to explain to us, wherefore the glory of GOD, and of the LAMB, are both said in this verse, (23,) to lighten the city. It is the glory of GOD, to all intents and purposes, when shining in, and from CHRIST: *For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.* Coloss. ii. 9. And hence, this glory, which is the source of all light, yea, the light and life of men, must supersede, and render unnecessary, all the luminaries of heaven. How strikingly the Prophet speaks, when describing this day, in reference to CHRIST's glory. *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his angels, gloriously.* Isaiah xxiv. 23.

Reader! think then, of the present greatness, and glory of the LORD JESUS, by what the disciples saw of him in the Mount, and by what he will then appear, when he lightens his kingdom with his own personal glory? This is He, *whom man despiseth!* This is He, *whom the nation abhorreth!* This is He, whose GODHEAD some call in question; and yet, by a perversion of all language, call them-

selves Christians! Oh! the awful delusion of those, whom the god of this world hath blinded! But recollect, that the glory in which he appeared in the Mount, was but a glimpse, not a full blaze. The poor disciples could not have borne it. *Paul* was made blind three days, only from a transient view of it. And yet, what was that, compared to the glory *Paul* saw, when by vision he was caught up to heaven? The Apostle could not tell, when the vision was over, whether he had been in the body, or out of the body. 2 Cor. xii. 1—4. Blessed, glorious SAVIOR! Oh! for faith to behold thee now, until with open face, without a medium, we come to thy glory, and are *changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD!* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

24 ¶ And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for their shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abominations, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

In the close of this Chapter, in these verses, we have the vast distinction drawn, between the saved and the lost. The nations of them saved, meaning CHRIST's Church, gathered out of all nations, are here said *to walk in the light of the LORD*; meaning, that this is their glory; and the kings of the earth, that is, CHRIST's redeemed ones, redeemed from the earth, from among men, and *made Kings and Priests to God, and the FATHER*, (Rev. i. 6.) bring all their glory of redemption into it. No gates are shut. No prevention of access to God, in CHRIST, and by CHRIST, night, or day. An everlasting union, and communion, is now enjoyed by the saints; and they, even the saints of God, bring all the revenue of glory, to God, and the LAMB, into it.

But, while the redeemed have thus an entrance abundantly administered unto them, into God's everlasting kingdom; here is a final clause, which for ever shuts out all that are not written in the LAMB's Book of Life. The defiled, the worker of abomination, and the lover and maker of a lie. And who are the defiled, but the unregenerate, and unwashed, and unrenewed. They who never felt the SPIRIT's work upon the heart, in quickening them from the death of sin. They who work an abomination, by looking for acceptance, in whole, or in part, in their own righteousness, instead of wholly looking for redemption in CHRIST's blood. And they who feed upon ashes, and not the bread of life, whose *deceived heart hath turned them aside, so that they cannot deliver their souls, and say, is there not a lie in my right hand.* Isaiah xlv. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold with an eye of steady faith, the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth! Yea, look again and again, with rapture, at the Church coming down from God out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband! Bless God the FATHER, in the contemplation, for his electing love, in choosing; for his giving love, in giving the Church to his dear Son; and for all the ten thousand manifestations of his love, in predestinating each, and every individual of the mystical body, to the adoption of children, by JESUS CHRIST to himself, and accepting the whole Church in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

Bless God the SON, for his betrothing his Church before all worlds, watching over her, in all the time-state of her sad adulterous departure from him; redeeming her with his blood, washing her from her sins, clothing her with his righteousness, bringing her home, and presenting her to himself, in the marriage-supper, prepared for her in his kingdom of glory.

Bless God the SPIRIT for his anointings in the early formation of CHRIST and his Church as one, before the foundation of the world, for his quickening and regenerating grace in time, and for all his leadings, teachings, comfortings, and renewings, when glorifying the LORD JESUS to the Church's view, and directing the heart into the love of God. Oh! for grace, while contemplating the Church, the LAMB's wife, to behold with yet greater rapture and joy, the LAMB himself, and bless the whole persons of the GODHEAD, for all their love and mercy to the Church in Him.

And what a state of unspeakable felicity is the Church here brought to, after all the temptations of *Satan*, the deceivings of the heart, and the opposition from the world. Precious JESUS! thou art the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all blessedness. Blessed are all thy gifts and all thy manifestations in wiping away all tears from off all faces, and putting an everlasting end to all sorrow and sin. But blessed yet more art thou for thy love. Do thou, LORD, who art the everlasting light, and the glory of heaven, be the light and glory of thy Church on earth. LORD! shine daily on my soul, until thou shalt bring me home to this blessed city, where neither sun nor moon shall any more be needful, for thou, LORD, wilt be the light of all the poor Gentiles thou hast brought into thy kingdom, *and the glory of thy people Israel.*

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

GOD the HOLY GHOST in this Chapter finisheth the Subject of all the Prophecies; and with it, the whole Canon of Scripture. The LORD gives the Church a further Account of the Holy City. Here is spoken of, the River of Life, and the Tree of Life; and the LORD's Promise, of coming quickly. A gracious Invitation at the End, to all the People of God. A solemn Caution, not to add to, or take from, the Things written herein.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,

With what a blessed fulness this Chapter opens! *A river of water of life.* Not a stream, not a pool, which might be subject to dry; but a river. And not only a river, but of water of life; giving life wheresoever it shall come. And what can this prefigure, but the everlasting, ever-living, and ever-flowing love of JEHOVAH, in his three-fold character of Persons; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST? And what a thought it is, to refresh the soul of a child of God, this river hath been running in love to the Church in CHRIST from all eternity. Yea, there never was a moment in the eternal world, call that moment in the language of eternity by whatever name you may, in which it can be said that God began to love the Church. For this would imply a change in God. A thing impossible. Hence, if it be asked, when God's love to the Church began; it must be said, from the same time God began to be; even from all eternity. Reader! pause, and ponder well this love of God; and then look at this river so running from out of the throne of God and the LAMB!

But though running from all eternity, and to all eternity; yet you and I could trace nothing of it, until by the washing from it, in regeneration, we were quickened into spiritual life to behold its pure and living streams. It ran, hidden from all view, in the secret purposes of God, until by rising above ground in the time-state of the Church, it ran down from the first opening of creation, through redemption in CHRIST's blood; and the water of regeneration by the HOLY GHOST, and all the streams, made glad the city of God. Ephes. i. 7. Titus iii. 3, 4, 5. Psm. xlv. 4.

The properties of this river are most blessed. It is said to be *pure*. And, as it flows from God, how shall it be otherwise than pure; and how sure to make clean all hearts wheresoever it comes. It is said to be *clear as crystal*. Yes! every thing is clear in divine truths, when God is the Teacher. God the FATHER gives clear revelations of his SON. Ephes. i. God the SON maketh himself known to his people otherwise than he doth to the world. John xiv. And God the SPIRIT taketh of the things of CHRIST, and sheweth to the people, when giving testimony in the heart of the child of God to the FATHER's revelation of JESUS. Reader! do not fail to observe that this river was seen by *John* proceeding out of the throne of God and the LAMB. This proves the existence of THREE Persons in the GODHEAD. For when CHRIST spake of the HOLY GHOST, as being given to the Church, he described him as *rivers of living water*. John vii. 37—39. Here then we see it. This river proceeded from God and the LAMB. And let not the Reader overlook the blessed qualities of this river. It is a River, full, pure, clear, yea, the water of life; giving life wheresoever it comes. Blessed be God for opening to the Church's view, through *John*, a sight of this river. And, Reader! if a sight of it be blessed; what must an enjoyment of it be? Oh! the blessedness to drink of it, to wash in it, and to have everlasting life from it, in the united mercies of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

2 ¶ In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded

her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

There can be no doubt, but that JESUS himself is the Tree of Life. He is in the midst of the street, for he is the Center of every thing that is blessed. He is the middle Person of the GODHEAD in his divine nature. And he is the Mediator between God and man in his human nature. And he is in the midst of the street in standing up to mediate in his Church between a living God and dying sinners; while his people are unregenerated, and dead in trespasses and sins. He is also on either side of the river, for he is with *the spirits of just men made perfect*; and He is with his redeemed, here below, which have not yet passed the river *Jordan*, the river of death. He is, as his type *Joseph* represented him, *a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.* Gen. xlix. 22.

But, Reader! look at JESUS as the Tree of Life. Yea, let you and I beg of God the HOLY GHOST, that we may not only look at him, but that he will lead us now by faith, before the LORD calls us home in reality, to go and sit down in this paradise of God, under JESUS, the Tree of Life. JESUS is suited both for shelter and for food. He hath every thing in him, that can answer all our wants. Like some rich tree, in the midst of a desert, so is CHRIST, in the desert of this world, a luxuriant Tree, whose branches shelter us from the heat, or storm, and at the same time will yield us fruit, to refresh us. And he is the Tree of Life, for there is life in no other, and his people have no life but in him. He saith himself, *because I live ye shall live also.* John xiv. 19. And as he first gives life, so he preserves it. He is an Ever-green. Yea, this scripture saith, that he beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth fruit every month; and even the very leaves have a medicinal healing quality in them. Reader! can your heart be insensible to these things? JESUS is the Tree of Life. He is so, to both Churches. Here on earth, and there in heaven; being on either side the river. He bears twelve manner of fruits, that is, all variety. He hath pardon, mercy, peace, grace, love, strength, comfort, deliverance in temptations, recoveries in backslidings, helps in times of need, preparation for ordinances, and blessings in the use of them. And every month, yea, every day, the LORD brings them forth. And even the very leaves of providence shall have a somewhat in them to heal. Oh! thou dear LORD! give me to sit down, day by day, under thee, as the Tree of Life; and ere long, sure I am, I shall sit down, to rise no more, under all thy wide-spreading branches of all fullness, in thy paradise for ever!

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 ¶ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for

the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

The first of these verses becomes a blessed confirmation, that CHRIST hath redeemed his Church from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her. Gal. iii. 13. Here, in this triumphant state of the Church, CHRIST reigning with his saints, nothing can enter to corrupt. No serpent, for the devil, who entered the first paradise of Eden, is at this time, when CHRIST is with his Church, in hell. No beast, nor false prophet, for they are both in the lake of brimstone and fire. Hence there can be no more curse. Oh! the blessedness of this Church of God! And, as a further confirmation, God's people are sealed. God's throne, and the throne of the LAMB, is in it. God enlightens it. They see his face. And he sees theirs, and his name is in their foreheads. And it is again repeated, God and the LAMB are their light.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, worship God.

I beg the Reader to be very particular in observing the different speakers. Here, we have the Person, from whom *John* was now receiving intelligence, concerning the Church, in her happy state, declaring that what he had delivered, were faithful, and true sayings. And he saith, as plain as words can make any thing, that the LORD God of the holy Prophets, that is, CHRIST JESUS, had sent his angel, meaning himself, to shew these things unto his servant *John*. But you will say, how is this proved? I answer. In the opening of this book, (and the opening, from beginning to end, is like a letter, but one thing,) the very first verse, like the direction to a letter, runs thus: *The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST—mark that!—which God gave to him to shew unto his servants* (meaning the Church) *things which must shortly come to pass*. Now mark! *And he sent and signified it, by his Angel, unto his servant John*. Now, if ever any thing of plain, common sense, is to be found, it is here. God the FATHER gave to his dear SON a revelation, to come forth, and com-

municate. This JESUS hath done. And he sent, and signified it, by a messenger, or angel, to *John*. So then, this messenger, this angel, was the person, which this LORD GOD of the holy Prophets, JESUS CHRIST, sent to inform *John*. And *John* was so much struck with the account, that in the moment of the extacy of his mind, he would have worshipped the angel. But the angel suffered him not. And he gave this reason. *I am thy fellow servant*; that is, a fellow servant of GOD, and of the LORD GOD of the Prophets, JESUS CHRIST: worship him!

But perhaps it will be said by some, is there not some little difficulty in this sense, in respect to the words in the seventh verse, *behold I come quickly! blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*. To which I answer, No! Nay, so far from it, they are rather a confirmation. The Angel reminds *John* of what had passed at the opening of the interview, between JESUS and *John*, as related in the first Chapter, verses 1—3. JESUS had before said, *behold I come quickly*, Chap. iii. 11. Therefore, the Angel repeats those words, to remind *John* of what CHRIST had said. And also to remind him, of what *John* had himself said, concerning blessedness, to those who kept the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Chap. i. 3. Hence, therefore, it is as plain as words can make it, that this Angel now conversing with *John*, was a fellow servant with *John* and not CHRIST; and therefore, he could be no object of worship.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Here I conceive CHRIST himself becomes the speaker. And, indeed, at this verse, opens, in some measure, a new subject. We hear no more now to the end of the Chapter, of the Church of CHRIST in the *Millennium*-state. But now here is a charge given by CHRIST, that this book of prophecy shall be an open book, and not sealed. As if the LORD would have all the Church acquainted with it, from generation to generation.

And I pray the Reader to observe in further confirmation, that this decision of CHRIST, of the filthy and unjust, and on the other hand of the righteous and holy, continuing for ever unaltered, proves the Almightyness of the speaker, in this final sentence, (for who but the LORD himself could so decide?) and confirms, that this thousand years reign of CHRIST having began, admitted of no alteration. The subject is solemn, but it is most awfully true. The miserable in eternity, if they were relieved from their misery, cannot be altered from their nature, which is the cause of their misery, and therefore, continuing unchanged in nature, they must continue unchanged in pain. So sure, so certain, is that saying of the LORD by *Abra*,

ham, between the two worlds, between the two natures, the two seeds of CHRIST, and the serpent, there is a great gulph fixed. Luke xvi. 25, 26. There can be no passing from one to another; Neither if there were, would this soften the evil. All the principles in nature, fire and water, heat and cold, life and death, are not more opposed than CHRIST and *Belial*; the children of the evil one; and the children of the kingdom!

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

If we needed any additional testimony in proof of the GODHEAD of CHRIST here we have it very blessedly. In the old Testament scripture, we find the LORD, more than once informing the Church, of his coming to their comfort. Thus for example, he saith by the Prophet. *Behold! the LORD GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.* Isaiah xl. 10. And again, *Behold! the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him!* Isaiah lxii. 11. And here we find similar language, as also more than once, in this blessed book of God. Chap. iii. 11—20. And when we add to these testimonies, that it is CHRIST that is to be the judge both of quick and dead, that the FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON; what higher testimonies can we have that it is the SON of GOD all the way through, who, in our nature was, and is the visible JEHOVAH, and that He, and He only, is the LORD administrator, in all the departments of divine government. Acts x. 42. John v. 22.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

The blessedness pronounced on the LORD's people and the misery on the ungodly, are strongly marked in these verses. Doing the commandments of God, as a right to the Tree of Life, is a comprehensive way of speaking, which includes in it an union with CHRIST, and a communion in all that belongs to CHRIST. When CHRIST was preaching in the days of his flesh, and had just mentioned of the sealing of the FATHER, the Jews put the question to him, *what shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* To which JESUS made this remarkable answer! *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* John vi. 27—29. A belief in CHRIST, when that belief is inwrought by the HOLY

GHOST in the soul, will be followed with all the blessed effects, and fruits of obeying CHRIST's commandments. But, where there is no work of GOD the SPIRIT in the soul, there can be no obedience to the commandments in the heart. Hence it is said, that *without are dogs and sorcerers, and persons of all uncleanness, having never been renewed.*

It is a sweet testimony of an union with CHRIST, when we derive all grace for obedience, *from* CHRIST. JESUS imparts every thing suited to his members; and for this plain reason, because He is the head of all fullness. So that when CHRIST gives out of his fullness, while the advantage is theirs, the glory is His. When a child of GOD is first quickened, is it not CHRIST's SPIRIT quickening? When a child of GOD is led on in the way of grace, is it not CHRIST's grace, made sufficient for him, and the LORD's strength made perfect in his people's weakness. And what a fullness of glory for this communication, from the fullness of his grace, will be accumulated in that day, for JESUS's everlasting crown of Mediator majesty; when CHRIST shall have the full ascription of glory, from the whole body of his members, and they are all come to this perfect man, CHRIST JESUS, *according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST!* Ephes. iv. 13.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

As we are here drawing nigh to a close, the LORD JESUS doth here again as he did at the beginning, take to himself his own sovereign-power and GODHEAD, and saith, *I Jesus have sent mine Angel.* And who but GOD sends Angels? Oh! how sweet are these accumulated testimonies of CHRIST's GODHEAD, to the people of GOD. How overwhelming to CHRIST's enemies? But JESUS adds another. He calls himself *the root and the offspring of David.* A circumstance impossible, upon any principle of common sense, but as GOD and Man, (as CHRIST indeed is,) in one Person. For, as GOD, he is the root of *David* and of all things. And, as man, he is the offspring of *David*, after the flesh. 2 Tim. ii. 8. But suppose for a moment, his GODHEAD was not, how could he have been the root of *David*. Take away his manhood, and how could he be the seed of *David*. Oh! blessed testimony, as JESUS himself stated it to the Pharisees of old. Matt. xxii. 42 to the end, compared with Psm. cx. 1. Romans i. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 8. Beautiful is the similitude the LORD makes of himself to the Morning Star. For, as the root of *David*, in the old Testament-dispensation, and long before he arose in his incarnation as the Sun of Righteousness, he shone bright and glorious like a star of the first magnitude, and as the sure pledge of day in the firmament of the scriptures, both by *David* and the other Prophets. And to this hour he continues in his morning risings, as the *day dawn*, and *day star* in the hearts of his people. So that this is a sweet figure in the morning planet of our JESUS, when in the wintry days, he ariseth as the sure harbinger of the Sun of Righteousness, which will follow.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

I do not wish to be considered as speaking decidedly upon the subject, but as it strikes me, this is GOD the HOLY GHOST making a response to CHRIST, and the Church following the same, and the looker on, and him that heareth, catching the sound from the same words, as JESUS had so graciously uttered them; and echoing the invitation. When JESUS saith, *Behold I come quickly*, the HOLY GHOST saith, *Even so, come*, LORD JESUS, and the whole Church the Bride, being quickened and regenerated, are longing for his coming. And the *hearer* of the promise, is included in the same, he longeth for it. Yea, the thirsty, and whosoever will, whomsoever the LORD hath put a *thirst* for CHRIST in the heart, and a *willingness* in the soul to receive JESUS, all join in the fervent cry. The water of life is a river, open, free, full, and everlastingly running. All shall be welcome to take their fill from it, if CHRIST by his grace, be welcomed in their hearts to fill them.

I cannot allow myself to pass away from this most gracious verse, before that I have called upon the Reader to observe with me, a certain interesting point concerning it, which may not perhaps before have arrested his notice. But it is worthy our closest remark, that in the last *public* sermon the LORD JESUS ever preached, and which was at the Jewish passover, he closed all he had to say, in words similar to those with which the HOLY GHOST hath closed the canon of scripture. *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.* John vii. 37. And here we find the HOLY GHOST sealing up the last of his blessed scriptures, in words to the same effect. So that here is CHRIST at one time, and the HOLY GHOST at another, both engaged in the same thing. So earnest is CHRIST, when on earth, and when in heaven, as well as the SPIRIT, that his Church shall hear his voice, and be on the look-out for his coming.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book:

Here is a solemn testimony, and of CHRIST himself, the faithful and true witness, and delivered in the most decisive manner possible,

that the adding to, or taking from the words of the prophecy contained in this book, shall bring on the utter ruin, and everlasting misery of any and every one so offending. And the reason is very obvious. CHRIST is GOD's witness, and his own. He hath delivered the whole truths necessary to salvation. He hath confirmed it in all ages, by Prophets and Apostles, by miracles and signs, and, above all, by his death, resurrection, and return to glory, and by the sending down the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. And in the hearts of his people he hath given yet further confirmation, by the regenerating and quickening influence of GOD the SPIRIT. So that, attested by such evidences, for any man to call those words of CHRIST in question, to prevent or mutilate, to gainsay or resist, cannot but bring down the just judgment of GOD. LORD! give grace to thy people, to receive with meekness thy engrafted word, and to esteem it more than their necessary food.

20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

This is a most gracious repetition of JESUS's promise to his Church. It ought to be often in our thoughts. The LORD was then at the door of departure. He looks back once more. Before he takes a farewell, he sets his seal to his testimony, and, in his very last words, puts a *surely* to his often before repeated promise, and saith, *surely I come quickly!* And GOD the HOLY GHOST by *John*, in the name of the Church, makes answer to his gracious promise, and saith, *even so come LORD JESUS!* Oh! precious LORD! is it not as if to say, though I leave off speaking publickly to the Church; I do not leave you in private. My heart, my affections are with you. I will come again, and take you to myself, that, where I am, there you may be also. Surely *I come quickly!* *Even so, come LORD JESUS!*

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

John closeth all with the sweet apostolical benediction. *The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with you all Amen.* Reader! this is among the greatest of all blessings, the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, including, as it doth, the FATHER's love, and the SPIRIT's fellowship. All grace can only be *in CHRIST*. And all grace only *from CHRIST*. And all the actings of our faith upon grace, from the grace given us *by CHRIST*. Oh! then, for the LORD, to give out largely, fully, daily, and momentarily to his people grace, that of *his fullness we may all receive, and grace for grace*. Once more, may the LORD both say it and confirm it, *the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with you all, Amen.*

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSING, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever. LORD! upon the bended knee of thanksgiving and praise, let all thy Church

praise thee, for this among all thy other unnumbered mercies, that thou hast given to thy servant *John*, this precious portion of thy sacred word, to shew unto thy Church things which must shortly come to pass. Blessed be the LORD for the accomplishment of such parts, as have been already fulfilled, and of others that are now fulfilling in the earth. And do thou, LORD, give thy servants grace, to wait in full exercise of faith and hope, the accomplishment of all that remains to be fulfilled. And since thou hast caused it to be left upon record for the encouragement of the faithful, saying, *blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.* Rev. i. 3. LORD! I beseech thee, let these blessings be my portion, that I may both read, and hear, and keep those glorious truths, by thy grace in my heart.

Let the blessed prospect of this reign of CHRIST in his Church, comfort and encourage all thy people. And while here below, let the souls of thy redeemed both drink and be satisfied with the streams of *that river, which make glad the city of God.* Oh! for grace, to sit down oft by faith, till the LORD shall take my soul home to sit down for ever in full enjoyment, under *the Tree of Life.* Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end* of all my spiritual joys. Thou that art *the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star;* be thou my all in all, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity. Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all the fulness of blessings, and JESUS, and all his fulness in blessings, both for the life of grace that now is, and for that life of glory which is to come.

And be thou thanked with all the love and affection of a brother, faithful *John!* for thy tenderness to the Church in JESUS, and for all thy ministry and labor of love. We regard the servant while we bless the Master. And blessed be our GOD and SAVIOR, for calling thee to the ministry, highly honored Apostle of our GOD! When JESUS shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, how will JESUS our GOD and SAVIOR shine in all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily, encircled with all his Apostles and Prophets, and Martyrs, and the redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, *who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB.* Oh! for the poorest and unworthiest of all the LORD's redeemed ones, to be found in the throng, and to join the hymn of salvation and praise, with all the Church of GOD for evermore.

And now, Reader, in folding up the whole of my *Poor Man's Commentary*, while I lay low in the dust before GOD, under a conscious sense of unworthiness, and my continued short comings, I desire to set up a renewed *Ebenezer* to the praise of his grace, who hath hitherto helped me, and borne with me, all the way through, in the many years since first I entered upon it, to the hour of writing with my pen the last line of it. The more I contemplate the subject, the more I stand amazed at the LORD's goodness, and my undeservings.

I know not whether, after all my endeavours and earnest desires to exalt the adorable name of JESUS, I have succeeded so far, as that the Reader may perceive, that this is the sole object I have all along had in view. To speak of Him as He really is, I know is impossible. Neither men nor angels are competent to this service.

For, of Him it must be said, without any strain of language, THERE IS NO END OF HIS GREATNESS. But, I have only labored so far and in the best manner I have been able, to hold up, and hold forth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST as GOD'S CHRIST, and as the sole perfection of all his people. Oh! that the LORD by his grace, may so seal Him in my heart!

And now, Reader, farewell! I hope the LORD hath pardoned, and will pardon all the errors of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and that you will pardon them also. And having said this, *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build his whole family up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Amen. To the one only GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, be endless praises. Amen, and Amen.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,

April 13, 1816,

Once more made memorable in being my
birth day, counting Sixty-three years
of the LORD's grace, and my sins.

ERRATA.

The Reader is desired to pardon the following errors of the Press, amidst others of a less nature, which escaped the Printer's observation :

VOL. II.

Page 33,	line 2,	from the bottom, in the note, <i>the holy</i> , should be <i>thy holy</i> .
145,	line 4,	in the note, <i>prayer</i> , should be <i>praise</i> .
284,	line 7,	<i>knew</i> , should be <i>know</i> .
403,	line 29,	<i>divine lusts</i> , should be <i>divers lusts</i> .
567,	line 19,	<i>assimulating</i> , should be <i>assimilating</i> .
653,	lines 31, 32,	<i>yet untaught</i> , should be <i>yea unthought</i> .
673,	lines 11, 12,	<i>us the adoption</i> , should be <i>unto the adoption</i> .

VOL. III.

Page 6,	verse 22,	the first <i>wot</i> , should be <i>what</i> .
9,	line 19,	<i>no man's faith</i> , should be <i>one man's faith</i> .
14,	line 4	from the bottom, <i>weariness</i> , should be <i>wariness</i> .
41,	line 1,	after Coloss. ii. 9. put <i>Secondly</i> .
94,	line 14,	last word <i>second</i> , leave out.
171,	line 18,	<i>repeatedly</i> , should be <i>reputedly</i> .
232,	line 2,	<i>tabulated</i> , should be <i>tribulated</i> .
----	---- 17,	<i>warning</i> , should be <i>warming</i> .
242,	line 16	from the bottom, <i>intentially</i> , should be <i>intentionally</i> .
326,	line 3,	in the reflections, <i>yet</i> should be <i>yes</i> .
389,	line 10	from the bottom; <i>heavenliness</i> , should be <i>heavenlies</i> .
446,	line 12	from the bottom, <i>either</i> , should be <i>neither</i> .
487,	line 6	from the bottom, <i>fall</i> , should be <i>all</i> .
526,	after the 19th line,	put in REFLECTIONS.
609,	line 22	from the bottom, for <i>The issue is doubtful</i> , read, <i>The issue is not doubtful</i> .
610,	at the top of the page	put REFLECTIONS.
612,	line 24,	after the word <i>left</i> , add <i>out</i> .

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