

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us bless God the HOLY GHOST for those precious Acts of his Apostles in his Church, for most blessed and delightful they are, as monuments of the Lord's grace in his servant's ministry. Think what multitudes now in glory, enjoyed the sweet savor of them, while on earth. Think how daily now the LORD is blessing them to his people. And, think what numbers yet unborn, will in succession rise up to the enjoyment of them, when you and I shall have been gathered to our fathers, and have seen corruption. Let us close our perusal of this sweet book of God, with thanks to the Almighty Author of it, for all the mercy shewn in it, and by it, to ourselves, and to all that are past. And let our prayers be added, that the LORD may continue to bless its use to endless generations. Amen.

THE
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
ROMANS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter upon the inspired writings of the Apostle *Paul*. They may well be called inspired; for *Paul* himself was taught by the HOLY GHOST, to tell the Church, that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD*. So that in truth, GOD the SPIRIT is the Author, and his Servants are but the Pen-men of all the holy records. And hence we do right, when at any time we make quotations from the Word of GOD, instead of saying, (as is but too commonly done,) the Apostle, whose name the writing bears, saith thus, or thus: We consider GOD the HOLY GHOST himself the speaker, by his servant, and give the LORD the glory. For this would tend, under GOD, to keep alive in our remembrance, both the Person and authority of Him that speaks; and cause us to look beyond the words *which man's wisdom teacheth, to the words which the HOLY GHOST teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

The Epistle to the *Romans*, is placed first in point of order

to all the writings of the Apostle *Paul*. But this priority is not on account of the *time* when written, for many of the Epistles which bear his name, were written before it. Perhaps it stands first in the list of *Paul's* Epistles, partly by reason of its bulk, being larger than all his other writings, and partly on being directed to the Church of the chief city in the *Roman* Empire.

The persons to whom it is addressed are said to be *Romans*. By which is meant, not the whole body of the people who lived at *Rome*; but the Church of GOD in that place. *Paul* indeed, declares as much, in the opening of the Epistle, when directing it: *to all that be in Rome, beloved of GOD, called to be saints*. It is highly needful, that this should be always kept in view. And, not only in relation to this Epistle of *Paul* to the *Romans*, which is now before us, but in all the writings of the servants of the LORD, in their Epistles. And, I take occasion from hence to remark to the Reader, the great importance of the thing itself. For, to the general inattention on this subject, must be ascribed the sad perversion, which is not unfrequently made, of particular passages in those holy writings, to wrong purposes. I mean, when the carnal and ungodly make application of certain words and promises found in them to themselves, and the world at large; which, if properly considered, would be found as belonging only to the LORD'S people.

The *place*, and time of writing of this Epistle by *Paul*, may be easily learnt from the date, which is given in the close of it, and from several incidental passages we meet with here and there in the different parts of it. He dates it from *Corinth*. And in the last Chapter, he tells the Church at *Rome*, that *Gaius, his host, and Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, (that is, the city of Corinth,) sent their salutations to the Church*. Chap. xvi. 23. And this is further confirmed, by what the Apostle saith elsewhere. 1 Cor. i. 14. Acts xviii. 8. Moreover, *Phæbe*, by whom *Paul* sent this Epistle, is said to be a servant of the Church at *Cenchrea*, a small seaport of the *Corinthians*, about eight miles from the city. Rom. xvi. 1. and verses 1, 2. And, from these particulars, it is no difficult matter to discover the *time* when the Apostle sent it to the Church; perhaps about the year of our LORD GOD 57, when *Paul* was on the eve of departure from *Corinth*. See Acts xx. 2, 3.

But the most important point to be attended to, in these general observations, by way of introduction to the Epistle, is the enquiry, what was the great and leading object GOD the HOLY GHOST might be supposed to have in view, in sending so blessed a portion of his holy word to the Church. And this, be it spoken to the LORD'S glory, and the Church's happiness,

is as plain and evident as if written with a sun-beam. The one chief doctrine taught in it to the Church, is the method of the sinner's acceptance before GOD, *of justification alone, through faith, by the LORD JESUS CHRIST.* This glorious truth runs through the whole Epistle, like one continued golden chain, linked together in all its bearings, and may be seen, more or less, in every Chapter. And the doctrine is set forth in such plain and clear terms, as if GOD the SPIRIT had determined, for the Church's happiness, that no possible mistake should arise, in the minds of any of his people, when taught of Him, on a point of such infinite consequence. Hence he shews, that this method of GOD's own providing of justification, in and by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is totally distinguished *from*, and wholly unconnected *with* the law, either in whole, or in part: and, that an obedience to the precepts of the law, hath not the smallest share in contributing to the merciful design of JEHOVAH, in this plan of salvation. All is the result of free sovereign grace. CHRIST is here set forth as the One ordinance of heaven. Salvation is shewn to be in no other. CHRIST is the sole cause. And, even the sweet and precious influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which manifest themselves in the hearts and lives of the redeemed, are shewn to be the blessed *effects*, and not in part the *cause*, of justification. The leading tenor and language of this blessed Epistle, runs, through the whole of it, to this effect; *being justified freely by the grace of GOD, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS.* Chap. iii. 24.

The Reader will enter upon the perusal of this Epistle, and have a better apprehension of the whole contents of it, if I previously give him a brief analysis of the several Chapters.

The Apostle begins from the platform of the subject, at his first Chapter, with describing the miserable state of every man by nature, in consequence of the fall; and, in the instance of the city of *Rome*, at that time advanced to the greatest height of human science, but sunk to the lowest degree of profligacy, he fully proves, that *the world, by wisdom, knew not GOD.* From the Gentile, he next goes on to the Jew, and in his *second* and *third* Chapters, states a faithful account of that highly-favored nation. But here, as in the former instance, he makes it abundantly plain and evident, that all are alike included under sin: and that *by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified before GOD.* Chap. iii. 19, 20. Foreseeing, however, that some objections might be made to arise among those who prided themselves in their being descended from *Abraham*, as if the case of that great Patriarch became an exception to this statement of universal corruption; the Apostle, in his *fourth* Chapter, takes up the full force of the objection on this ground, and proves, in *Abraham's* instance, the truth

of the doctrine which he had before asserted. He shews most fully and decidedly, that *Abraham* himself was actually justified by faith in CHRIST, even when he was in a state of uncircumcision. And that in fact *the sign of circumcision* was appointed him, as *a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised.* Chap. iv. 10, 11.

Having thus most clearly and blessedly proved the truth of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in CHRIST, by such palpable evidences, the Apostle's mind seems to have been led out in the vast comprehension of the glorious subject, as he had been led to write it, in those *four Chapters*: and therefore in the *fifth*, he runs back to the very beginning of time, and, in stating the fall of *Adam*, and the Church in him, the Apostle is led to shew, that, as misery and ruin came by this *first Adam*, so blessedness and salvation came by the *second Adam*, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He proves here, with equal clearness and force of truth, that it is the goodness and grace of GOD, to bring the Church out of that *Adam*-corruption, by a means in which they have no part in the performance, as they were involved in an original ruin, to which, by actual transgression, they did not contribute. *As by the offence of one, (saith the Apostle,) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.* Chap. v. 18.

The *sixth, seventh, and eighth Chapters*, are directed to set forth the blessedness of the dispensation, that *being justified by faith, and having peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST*; the persons of believers are freed from all condemnation; and, from their union with CHRIST, they partake in his triumphs over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And the Apostle very fully shews, that so far are these privileges from tending to relax the motives, to a corresponding life of sanctity and holiness, such principles become the only source to give life to it, and ensure it. The Apostle speaks with an holy indignation and abhorrence of the bare suspicion, that they, who by union with CHRIST, are dead to sin, could live any longer therein. He denies it, as a thing impossible. Chap. vi. 1, 2. And very sure it is, that where justification by faith *in CHRIST*, springs out of a grace union with CHRIST, (and where this is not the case there can be no justification,) the most ample security is made for every thing that is blessed, in life and conversation. *For, (saith the Apostle,) as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the Sons of GOD.* Chap. viii. 14. *And if any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is none of his.* Chap. viii. 9.

In the *ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters*, the Apostle most blessedly dwells upon the grace and mercy of JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of persons, in this high dispensation

of his sovereignty and holiness. And here he manifests the Almightyness of the teaching he was under, when he wrote this Epistle. He speaks with such humbleness of soul, while bowing down under a sense of JEHOVAH'S wisdom and power in his appointment of things, as carries with it the highest testimony that GOD the HOLY GHOST guided the Apostle's pen.

The *twelfth*, *thirteenth*, and *fourteenth* Chapters, together with a part of the *fifteenth*, are directed to shew the Church what blessed effects will follow from those gracious principles formed in the heart, where the LORD'S people are living in a state of justification, by faith in CHRIST, before GOD. For, while CHRIST is lived upon by faith, the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in the heart, and induceth every thing that is truly blessed in life and practice. CHRIST being made the sole *cause* of salvation, the SPIRIT of CHRIST, in the believer, manifest the *effects*, as the sole work of GOD the SPIRIT. And these things are not spoken so much as *precepts*, but as *promises*; not so much in a way of *bidding*, as *enabling*: Similar to what the LORD JESUS said to his disciples; *Abide in me, and I in you. Continue ye in my love: that is, ye shall abide in me; ye shall continue in my love; and I will abide in you.* John xv. 4, 9. See Commentary there.

And thus the Apostle having accomplished the great design which GOD the HOLY GHOST had in view, when dictating this Epistle to the Church, *Paul* concludes the whole in the remainder of the *fifteenth* and the *sixteenth* Chapters, with his blessing and his prayers, accompanied with the affectionate remembrances of the brethren with him to the people, and desiring an interest in their prayers for him, in his person and ministry. And he closeth all, with giving *glory to GOD through JESUS CHRIST*.

Reader! I have only to call upon you, before we enter on the Epistle, to join me in spirit before the Throne, that the teachings of the same Almighty Lord, which guided the Apostle's pen, may guide our hearts, that in the reading of it, we may be made wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.* Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

Paul opens the Epistle with declaring his Apostleship. He salutes the Church, with the Profession of his brotherly Love: declares his willingness to visit them; and draws a faithful, but melancholy Picture of the Ungodly.

PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets, in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh ;

4 And declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead :

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name :

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ :

The Apostle very properly begins his address to the Church, with his own name and character, by way of grounding his authority in writing to them. He declares himself to be not only a servant of JESUS CHRIST, but called to be an Apostle, and separated to this service by GOD. So that, here is indirectly, an acknowledgment of the whole Persons of the GODHEAD ; and not unsimilar to what we meet with in the writings of the other Apostles. See Jude 1. 1 Pet. i. 2. And here, once for all, let it be observed, that the distinguishing office of an Apostle, made it necessary for *Paul*, to make out his just claim to that character. An Apostle, was not only one who received his authority immediately from CHRIST ; but the very name and office implied, in the person executing it, one that was a witness of CHRIST'S resurrection. So *Peter*, at the election of *Matthias*, in the room of the traitor *Judas*, declared it to be the design of the office. Acts i. 21, 22. Now, *Paul* was qualified to be an Apostle, having seen, and heard CHRIST, from heaven. Acts ix. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 1. and xv 8. And his ordination also, was by the HOLY GHOST. See Acts xiii. 1—4. and Commentary there. And he was separated, or set apart, by GOD the FATHER, from the womb for that purpose. See Gal. i. 15. See Jerem. i. 4, 5. Luke i. 15, 16, 17.

The Apostle next most properly adverts, to the design of his ministry, and the particular object, for which he wrote to the *Romans*. The whole is of CHRIST, GOD-MAN, and the momentous things connected with the revelation of the SON of GOD, from heaven. This had been indeed the sum and substance of all the writings and preachings of the Prophets of GOD, in all ages : but now, by the open manifestation CHRIST hath made of himself, in substance of our flesh, it became more fully known. And *Paul* dwells upon that feature of character, in this grace, the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead ; because, this glorious act, not only most compleatly proved his own eternal power, and GODHEAD, but also, as decidedly manifested his oneness, and union, in all the perfections, and distinguishing characters, which constitute GODHEAD, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST : each glorious Person, in that act of the resurrection,

having put their Almighty hand to the work. *Paul* saith, that *CHRIST* is declared to be the *SON* of *GOD* with power by this very deed. But, had *CHRIST* been raised from the dead, by the power of *GOD* the *FATHER* only; or by the *SPIRIT* of holiness only; or by both, without *CHRIST* having an hand in it: the resurrection, in either case, would not have declared him thereby to have been the *SON* of *GOD* with power. There would have been then no more a proof of *GODHEAD*, in the resurrection of *CHRIST*, than in the resurrection of any other body. But if, as was the case, when *JESUS* laid down his life *which no man could take from him*, he himself *took it again*; and when *put to death in the flesh*, he *quickeneth himself by his SPIRIT*; even his own eternal power and *GODHEAD*: here, his *GODHEAD* was completely proved. And hence, as this scripture states it, and is confirmed elsewhere, he was declared to be the *SON* of *GOD* with power; meaning, his own power, for nothing of the power of any other could have declared his *GODHEAD*. John x. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 18. John v. 21. Chap. xi. 25, 26. And, in further proof of the union of the divine nature, *CHRIST*'s resurrection is declared to have been the express act of the *HOLY THREE IN ONE*, who bear record in heaven. Here it is ascribed to the *SON* of *GOD* himself, and to the *SPIRIT* of holiness; and elsewhere to *GOD* the *FATHER*, whose grace in raising *CHRIST*'s body is spoken of as a pledge of raising up his members by his own power also. 1 Cor. vi. 14. Reader! do not hastily dismiss this view of the subject, for it is blessed. *JESUS!* (your *JESUS*, if so be the *SPIRIT* of *JESUS* dwells in your heart,) first offered himself without spot to *GOD* the *FATHER* through his own eternal *SPIRIT*, without spot to *GOD* for your offences; and then, by his own power, with the same *SPIRIT* of holiness, quickened himself, to rise again, for your justification. Hebrews ix. 14. Romans iv. 25.

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I beg the Reader to pause over this verse, in order that he may enter into a right apprehension, of what constitutes the Church of God. And, I do it the rather at this place, because the subject, once clearly understood, will minister to much information, on the same point, upon similar occasions, to be met with in the word of God. It is to the Church, *Paul* sends this Epistle, yea, all his Epistles. And all the Epistles of the Apostles, are directed to the Church in like manner. And the Church is declared to be *the beloved of God*, called to be saints. *Beloved of God*, from everlasting, Jerem. xxxi. 3. and *chosen in CHRIST* before all worlds. Ephes. i. 4. And, as these acts of free grace and favor, became the ground-work of all blessedness from all eternity: so, in proof, they are called to be saints, in the time-state of the Church, upon earth. Not born saints, but newborn; not making themselves saints, either in whole, or in part; but made so altogether by sovereign grace, resulting from sovereign love. So that, from the everlasting purpose, counsel, and will, of *JENOVAN*, in his threefold character of Persons, the Church owes her Being in *CHRIST*, before all time; and having been beloved of *GOD*, and called

to be saints, they are blessed in CHRIST with grace, during the whole of their time-state here below, and blessed in CHRIST in all his communicable glory and happiness, to all eternity. If the Reader be enabled, under divine teaching, to have this view of the Church always in remembrance; he will find the sweetness of it, in the several parts of the Word of God, in discovering the application of many a gracious portion, in direct reference to the Church of God, distinguished from the carnal world.

Neither at our entrance on those writings of the Apostles, may we too hastily pass over the very sweet apostolical benediction we meet with in the beginning, for the most part, of all their Epistles. Here the Apostle prays for *grace and peace*, and sometimes he connects with those twin blessings, *mercy* also; for CHRIST is himself mercy in the fullest and most comprehensive sense of the word, yea, *the mercy promised*. Luke i. 72. And as these blessings are the gracious effects which flow from the covenant-love and favor of JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of persons, towards the Church in CHRIST; so the Apostle prays as he opens his Epistles, with this benediction, that they may proceed from GOD our FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST. By which I humbly apprehend is meant, (as the Apostle elsewhere, when closing one of his Epistles, expresseth,) that both the beginning and the end may have a beautiful correspondence, he prays that *the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with the Church*. Amen. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

It were hardly necessary to detain the Reader with defining what is included in those great branches of the LORD's favor to his Church in CHRIST, *grace and peace*. Every one that reads the word of GOD with an enlightened eye, must perceive, that the terms carry with them a comprehension of all blessings, suited to the present time-state of the Church. *Grace*, in all its properties, original and eternal, in the first manifestations of it, and flowing from the same unceasing fountain, in all the after acts of it. Electing, regenerating, calling, redeeming, justifying, adopting, sanctifying, renewing, confirming, strengthening; yea, in short, all grace. *Peter*, the Apostle, on this account was directed to call GOD, *the God of all grace*, 1 Peter v. 10. which teacheth, that GOD is not only in himself, towards his Church and people, grace in his very nature and essence; but also, that all the grace he hath is for them. And what endears it yet more, is, that the several parts and portions of grace, in all the infinite varieties of it, the LORD knoweth what each child will want, during the whole time-state of their continuance here below; he lays it up for them; hath each portion separate for them; keeps it for them to the moment of need; and gives it out with such a sweetness of love and favor, as makes it doubly blessed, coming immediately from the LORD's own hand, and coming with his love marked on it, in the very time of need. I pray the Reader to turn to some few scriptures in proof. Gen. xxii. 11—14. Psm. lix. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Philip. iv. 19. Heb. iv. 14—16. And in like manner, *peace* takes in every blessing of time and eternity. Our peace is CHRIST himself. The Prophet, ages before CHRIST's incarnation, was taught to tell the Church, that *He should be our peace, when the Assyrian should come into our land*. Micah v. 5. And the Apostle sums up the whole mystery of godliness,

when he saith, *He is our peace, having made peace through the blood of his cross.* Ephes. ii. 14. Coloss. i. 20. In short, CHRIST is the everlasting peace of his people, *in God, and with God.* And well might the Apostle begin every Epistle with praying for it; for CHRIST, from all eternity, is both the means and the end, the source and fountain, in whom, and from whom all peace flows. He is the great restorer of peace to all the breaches sin and Satan have made in the time-state of the Church. It is He which brings his redeemed into peace and favor with God, and with our own consciences; takes away the natural enmity of our minds; and having opened a new and living way for our return to God by his blood, ever liveth to keep it open by his intercession. Precious JESUS! what a sweet thought is it to my soul, that amidst all the tribulation of the world, *in thee I have peace!*

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

I beg the Reader to observe, how the Apostle begins his subject to the Church, after he had finished his prayers to God, and implored grace and peace for the people. He enters upon his Epistle with thanksgiving. Reader! nothing can more effectually call forth praises to the LORD, when the heart is under the teaching of God the SPIRIT, than a deep sense of the LORD's mercies to the Church. Though *Paul* had no personal knowledge of the saints at *Rome*, yet knowing by their call to God in CHRIST, that they were beloved of God, they were beloved to *Paul* also. There is a oneness of heart and affection among the saints of God, which proves a kindred of souls, and manifests an union with each other, from an union with the LORD JESUS. No wonder the Apostle longed to see them, whose faith carried with it such an honorable testimony every where.

But what I would more particularly request the Reader to notice, is, what *Paul* expected from seeing them, namely, that while through grace he might be enabled to impart to them some spiritual gift, he

himself, though so great an Apostle, might receive from them comfort. It were devoutly to be wished that this statement of *Paul's* was but more generally regarded in our Churches, both by ministers and people. The Apostle here speaks of a *mutual faith*. And, surely, as the faith is the same in all the members of CHRIST's body, in all its properties, all flowing as it doth from one and the same fountain, which is CHRIST; however different in the greatness or smallness of the stream, it must be, or ought to be, a *faith which worketh by love*, and therefore the consequences would be truly blessed, if they were thus sought for. And it is very blessed both to minister and people, when the *one* is refreshed under the LORD from the labors of his servant, and the *other* is comforted in his own, and their establishment in grace by the word. *Paul* felt the sweetness of this, and so must all faithful ministers also, when they can adopt *Paul's* language; he told the *Corinthians*, that they had acknowledged his labors in part, and *we are* (said he) *your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's, in the day of the LORD JESUS.* 2 Cor. i. 11—14.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

I would pass over in the review of those verses all that *Paul* speaks of himself, (very interesting as it is to behold this great champion of his Master's cause,) with only one short observation, namely, the ground upon which the Apostle rests, when declaring he is not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST. I beg the Reader particularly to notice this. *Paul* was not ashamed of it, because he knew it in its saving power. And let my Reader not be offended when I say, that this personal knowledge can be the only security and preservative against shame. Any man, and every man, will want confidence to profess the Gospel of CHRIST, whether preacher or hearer, in all its purity, fulness, and glory, unless he himself hath in his own heart known it to be what *Paul* saith it is, *the power of GOD unto salvation, to every one that believeth.*

There is indeed what is called the Gospel, and which brings no shame among men, either in those that preach it, or those who hear it, and which is in such a spirit of accommodation to the world, that it is even become fashionable in the present day to attend it: I mean, where the great leading truths of the Gospel are thrown into the back ground, and a system of ethics supply the place. But, Reader! depend upon it, the shame *Paul* here speaks of, that he shrunk not from, is as much known now where **CHRIST** is fully and faithfully preached as it was in *Paul's* days. *The offence of the cross is not ceased.* The Lord forbid it ever should! It is the true standard of a real believer. And where the grand truths of the Gospel are held forth, and insisted upon as the whole counsel of **GOD**, the man who preacheth, or he that heareth these glorious doctrines, and rejoiceth in their infinite importance, must have received the same convictions as *Paul* had, or neither of them can adopt his language. Oh! the blessedness of knowing, by the saving work of **GOD** the **HOLY GHOST** upon the heart, that *it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!*

I cannot but beg the Reader's notice to what the Apostle saith concerning the righteousness of **GOD**; that it is *revealed from faith to faith.* That the righteousness here spoken of, is the righteousness of **GOD** our **SAVIOR**, is too plain to need further proof, than from what follows when it is added, *the just shall live by faith.* Jer. xxiii. 6. Dan. ix. 24. See chap. iii. 21, 22. And there can be no righteousness a man can live upon by faith, but this righteousness. Moreover, the just here named can mean no other than the justified soul in **CHRIST**, chap. iii. 24. But the revelation of this righteousness of **GOD**, *from faith to faith*, is not so easy to be understood, and hath been not a little perplexing to many. Some have supposed, that it means a revelation from the Old Testament faith to the New. Others have conceived, that the righteousness of **GOD**, being revealed, begets faith. And a *third class*, differing from both the former, and with more appearance of probability, have concluded, that it means *from* the first revelation of **GOD's** method of justifying a sinner, *to* all the after acts of faith in the enjoyment of it. But if I may venture to give my views of the passage, I should say, that it appears to me to be simply no other than to state, that this righteousness of **GOD**, revealed from faith to faith, is revealed *to* faith by way of shewing that it is not obtained by faith. The whole and sole cause of justification is **CHRIST**. *Faith* is no more than the hand to receive it by. And faith doth not give the least title to it. Nay, so far from that, faith is produced by the compleat work of **CHRIST's** righteousness. So that as faith hath no hand in the work, neither hath faith any merit in the performance. It is not revealed from works to faith: but from faith to faith. And as **CHRIST** is the great object of faith, so all the life and actings of faith are solely upon his person, blood, and righteousness.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness:

19 Because that which may be known of God

is manifest in them: for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness;

full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity ;
whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud,
boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to
parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers,
without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that
they which commit such things are worthy of
death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in
them that do them.

I must beg the Reader to spare me from entering into any further account than what is here given of the awful state of human nature by the fall. While I admire the chastity of language in the sacred writers, upon every occasion of this sort, when called upon to sketch the horrid features of man's portrait, since the apostacy of Adam, in which all his posterity are equally drawn, I behold enough in the picture to be humbled to the dust before God, and desire to gather from the whole, without enlarging on the several parts of the representation, yet fuller views of the infinite preciousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whose vast redemption alone, his Church is brought up from such an awful state of depravity. Here, Reader! if we look at what the Apostle hath drawn, and stand convinced under divine teaching, that what one of *Adam's* fallen sinful race hath done, all are equally capable of, and, but for the restraints of grace, would fall into; thus beheld, humbling as the view is, yet blessedly profitable will it become. And, oh! that the LORD may in this manner sanctify the Apostle's account here given to the souls of his people!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I both pause at the entrance on this blessed Epistle, and while we adore God the HOLY GHOST for so precious a gift to his Church, let us beg of Him to give us an understanding and believing heart, in the right apprehension of all its sacred contents. And here, in the very opening, let us look up and behold the LORD JESUS CHRIST in our nature, in all the glories of his person, and offices, and character. He was, he is declared to be, the SON of GOD, with power. His divine nature fully proved by his quickening SPIRIT, and his human nature by his death and resurrection, and both confirming his suitability to be *the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all!*

And, oh! what preciousness is hereby discovered of the Gospel of CHRIST! How blessedly adapted for the delivery of our poor nature from the ruins of the fall! How graciously contrived for the everlasting happiness of the Church! Reader! behold the holy joy of *Paul*, in his readiness to preach it to all that were in *Rome*, yea, all the world, among *the beloved of God, and called to be saints. I am*

not ashamed (said Paul,) *of the Gospel of CHRIST!* Ashamed? Who is, who can be ashamed at that which is the highest glory of our nature? The SON of GOD in our nature proclaiming mercy, pardon, and peace, in the blood of his cross. But, Reader! see to it, that we shrink not from the same standard, and the same cause; when we can say, and appeal as he did, *God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his SON!* Lord! grant that thy people, in the awful view of what thy servant hath here shewn of a fallen state, may be led to contemplate the blessed deliverance wrought out for the Church by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And, oh! for grace to enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of these unspeakable mercies, that while the righteousness of God therein is revealed from faith to faith, all truly justified believers may live by faith!

C H A P. II.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle having shewn in the foregoing Chapter, the sad State of all Men by Nature, he shews with equal Proofs arising from human Depravity, the total Inability of the Law to bring Sinners to God: and from hence, as in the former Instance, manifests the Necessity and Importance of the Gospel of CHRIST.

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgement of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well

doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life :

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile :

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Within the compass of those verses the Apostle enumerates very many things, which are, and must be confessedly plain and universally received truths, not only founded in revelation, but common sense and reason. But on these we need not dwell. *Paul's* evident intention in the introduction of them, is only in a way preparatory, to shew the inability of the law of *Moses* to justify sinners before God. The great design of this Chapter is to set this forth in the fullest colors, and, in the example of the Jew, to manifest that the law never did, neither was it ever designed, to bring sinners to God. And therefore he begins with stating common principles of right and wrong. All judgment proceeds upon this standard of equity. The Jews had a law. They brake it. And yet, while breaking it themselves, they condemned others who brake it also. Now, saith the Apostle, is it possible for you to suppose, that a law which you have broken can justify you? Can you think that a broken law can be your justification before God? Are you so senseless as to plead what becomes your very condemnation?

Such views of the subject contained in those verses, will serve to explain the several expressions made use of in the Apostle's reasoning. *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.* What repentance? Not that repentance which *CHRIST is exalted as a prince and a Savior to give.* Acts v. 31. God's gift cannot be man's merit. But the repentance here alluded to, is that *natural* sorrow which conscience will still excite in the heart, notwithstanding its present benumbed state, and as we see it doth in the worst of men, when their sins bring sorrow, and their crimes are followed by punishment. The vilest sinner alive is led to this *natural* repentance when judgment taketh hold of him. But this sorrow differs wholly from godly sorrow and true repentance, wrought in the heart by sovereign grace. This natural sorrow is wholly of man, the other is wholly of God. *Natural* repentance is excited by the dread of affliction: *gracious* repentance is awakened by the Holy Ghost, when convincing of sin. And while that of nature only acts as long as a fear of punishment hangs over the conscience, and the heart remains the same as it was before; that of grace brings with it a thorough change, and the life is reformed. The Apostle himself so describes it. *Godly sorrow* (said

he) *worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* 2 Cor. v. i. 10.

In like manner, when it is said in those verses, that *the Lord will render to every man according to his works, and that there is no respect of persons with God*: those expressions must not be accepted contrary to the general tenor of holy scripture. God hath no respect of persons, considered as to their own personal worth or doings. He hath no respect of persons, as to their place of birth, or relations from whom they are descended in the *Adam*-nature of generation, where the whole stock is from the original apostacy, all alike corrupt. Neither hath the Lord respect of persons, as some have ventured to suppose, from foreseeing what should arise in them, or be done by them, in the after circumstances of their life. *For all the good that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself.* Upon all these accounts, nothing can be more plain and evident than that God is no respecter of persons. There is, there can be nothing in the creature in a way of merit, which can act as a cause in the sight of the Lord to induce this respect. But it is equally certain, that while God respects no man's person, on either of the grounds here mentioned, yet the whole Church, and every individual of that Church, chosen in *CHRIST* before the foundation of the world, the Lord hath had respect to, on *CHRIST*'s account, and highly distinguished every one of their persons, as they are one with *CHRIST*, and hath accepted and beloved them in Him. And to the same amount, and on the same ground, the reward that the Lord is here said *to render to every man according to his deeds*; the sense is, not that the merit of every man, considered in himself, and without an eye to *CHRIST*, will form the standard of retribution. For, alas! if this were the case, everlasting condemnation must alike fall on all, for *all the world*; in the *Adam*-nature of an unregenerated, unrenewed state, *become guilty before God.* Rom. iii. 19. But the meaning is, (and indeed the verses which follow explain it,) as men are accepted in *CHRIST*, or as they reject *CHRIST* in their own souls. *They* (saith the Apostle) *who seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life*; that is, they seek those things in *CHRIST*. Indeed, no where else can they be found. *CHRIST* himself is eternal life. And they who have *CHRIST*, have eternal life in Him, and all the blessings connected with it. John xvii. 2. 1 John v. 11, 12. John iii. 36. But to them *that are contentious*, that is, contend against *CHRIST* as the whole of salvation, and stand upon the bottom of their own works, either in whole or in part, *there will be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.* Hence this scripture is in this way very fully established. *The Lord will render to every man according to his deeds.* Here are the deeds of faith, and the deeds of works. And the issue is as might be expected. Reader! ponder well the subject. Think what a mercy it must be in that final day of account, which *Paul* calls, *the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, to have a perfect, compleat, and all-sufficient righteousness to stand in, for the justification of our persons before God. That can only be found in the person of the Lord *JESUS CHRIST*. And if it be blessed *then*, so must it be *now*. Have you ever made it the subject of examination? Will you try it in the present moment? Put your hand upon your heart. Judge it yourself with a strict scrutiny, as it will be done

in the hour when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. And as a discovery of its workings will bring up proofs of its deceitfulness, Jer. xvii. 9. listen to what the HOLY GHOST speaks of CHRIST'S all-sufficiency, in the blood of the everlasting covenant. And if the LORD the SPIRIT shews you, that there is more in JESUS to save, than in sin to condemn, sweet will be the consolation that will follow. And depend upon it, if the LORD speaks peace *now*, he will not speak condemnation *then*. *He is of one mind, and who can turn him?* Job xxiii. 13. God will not unsay what he hath once said. *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* Job xxxiii. 24.

12 For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves;

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,)

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Here the Apostle enters upon the subject, which is the great design he had in view in this whole chapter. His object is to prove, that the *Jew* had no more advantage by the law, in a way of justification, than (as he had before shewn in the preceding chapter,) the *Gentile* had by the light of nature. Both were included under sin. Having introduced the subject by the preparatory verses, he here enters upon it in the consideration of the law.

And, first, he considers sinners in the *Adam*-nature of a fallen state, as sinning, and perishing without law, as a positive and decided proof, that all who sin under the law must be judged, and will consequently fall under the just sentence by that law. And then, in a parenthesis which takes up three verses, the Apostle draws the line of equity to prove the justness of this decision, as it relates both to Jew and Gentile; the one by the law of conscience, and the other by the law of the covenant given to Israel on *Mount Sinai*.

Some men, (indeed most men,) who have written, or commented upon the subject, have dwelt much upon the law of *Moses*, as divided into two parts; and have called it, *Ceremonial* and *Moral*. But this

distinction certainly is not scriptural; for there is not such a word in the whole Bible, as *Moral*. The Law indeed, is made up of precepts and ordinances; but then, both point to CHRIST, and both are fulfilled in CHRIST. And the law had no other tendency, than to act as a school-master to CHRIST. See Gal. iii. 24. and Commentary. And, as CHRIST is said by the HOLY GHOST, to be *the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth*; Chap. x. 4. in Him, both the accomplishment of the ordinances, and the fulfillment of the precepts, are alike found.

That the law, in all its bearings had this direction, and was intended for no other purpose, is evident, from the spirituality of its nature. Its chief object was to shew the necessity of a purity within; not of mere ceremonies without. And the law insisted upon an holiness of the thoughts, as well as of the actions. And, therefore, this one view alone is enough to manifest, that none of the *Adam*-nature stock could come up to it. Indeed it was never expected. For, the Apostle elsewhere saith, in answer to the important question; *wherefore then serveth the law? It was added, (saith he,) because of transgressions.* Gal. iii. 19. As if he had said, it was given, to set forth the spirituality of God's holy law; and the total impossibility of any one of the sons of *Adam*, by nature, fulfilling it. And what was all this, but Preaching CHRIST, in all his fulness and glory, as the Law-fulfiller, in the character and capacity of the Surety of his people? Heb. vii. 22.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law:

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law : but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ?

27 And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter, and circumcision, dost transgress the law ?

28 For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly ; neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh :

29 But he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

The Apostle having thus, in a *general* way, very fully established the main point he had in view, in proving the impossibility of justification before God, either by the law of nature, or by the law given by *Moses* ; now proceeds to make a *particular* address to the people, he all along had in contemplation, and calls upon the Jew, to form his own judgment. There is a very great beauty, both in the argument itself he makes use of, and in the manner of his using it ; which cannot fail, under the Lord, to have a sensible effect on every mind taught of God.

The Apostle first grants every thing that could be desired, in respect to the privileges and advantages of the Jews, above all nations of the earth. They had, as *Paul* elsewhere tells the Church, those great things done for them, which no people under heaven but themselves possessed. *To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises : Whose were the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, CHRIST came ; who is over all, GOD blessed for ever. Amen.* Chap. ix. 4, 5. A nation so distinguished, so marked with divine favors, might well be expected to have been distinguished also in every thing which should have marked a corresponding conduct. And ages before *Paul*, their great law-giver *Moses*, had both shewn them their advantages, and what should have followed. See Deut. iv. 5—9. But their history, furnished a woeful account of the reverse of all right conduct. And, from that period to the days of *Paul*, nothing, more or less, but daring rebellion, uniformly filled in, the pages of their national character. The Apostle briefly takes notice of their advantages as a people ; and makes this the foundation of his

appeal therefrom. *Behold!* (saith he,) *thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.* And the Apostle goeth on, to fall in with all of what the children of Abraham, after the flesh, boasted of, in order the more strikingly to prove his grand point, in their self-condemnation.

Paul next proceeds to charge upon the Jews the total neglect of all the precepts enjoined them. And he doth it in a way of question, which, as it waits not for an answer, (because in fact it needed none, being self-evident, and unanswerable,) becomes a more decided method, than so many positive assertions. And the Apostle having fully shewn, that the Jews, while priding themselves upon their laws, were defective in the observance of every one of them: while pretending to instruct the ignorant, were themselves wholly ignorant, and in the blindness of unregeneracy; while apparently approving the things that were more excellent, were acting in direct contradiction to them; he draws a conclusion, that in an instance so palpable, nothing could be more glaring, than that the *Jew* stood on the same footing with the *Gentile*, and both became alike guilty before God. Yea, *Paul* closeth this part of his charge with intimating, that from the greater inattention which the *Jew* observed to the law, as a rule of life, to what the unenlightened *Heathen* in many instances had followed, in the law of nature; the deficiency of the one, was less pardonable than the *other*: and the worse effects in the world in consequence took place. *For the name of God (saith Paul) is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* Isaiah lii. 5.

The *third* step the Apostle advances in, throws to the ground all that the *Jew* could lay hold of, in his vain pretensions to the divine favor, in shewing, that the rite of circumcision, in its highest extent, was simply nothing more than an *outward* sign of an *inward* effect. It consisted, not in any thing carnal, but spiritual. Not in a mere mark in the flesh, but the impression of grace in the heart. In short it pointed to *CHRIST*, being a seal of the covenant, and *CHRIST* himself the Covenant! And therefore, nothing could be argued in point of privileges, from circumcision; because in fact those privileges were all in *CHRIST*, to whom that rite referred. And consequently, a carnal *Jew* had not the smallest claim in the privileges of a spiritual Christian. Hence, from this plain and undeniable statement, the Apostle fairly, and fully concludes, that the *Jew*, no more than the *Gentile*, could find justification by the deeds of the law, before God. Reader! do not fail to remark, with what unanswerable force of argument the Apostle follows up the great and important doctrine, which he had entered upon, in the preceding Chapter; and to what a sure, however humiliating conclusion, he hath already advanced, when by such a clear train of evidences, the truth is fully seen; that the whole world, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, are manifestly proved guilty before God. Rom. iii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us, in the view of Israel, and the privileges of Israel, and the sad abuse of them by Israel; feel suitably affected with the sense of our mercies. Is it possible to behold that nation, to

mark the LORD's watchful eye over them as a nation; and now to call to mind their dispersion and misery, as a nation; and have no concern for ourselves, as a people?

Let us moreover solemnly deliberate, as fully shewn in their history, how incompetent both law and ordinances are, to bring the heart to GOD. Yea, let us in them learn, how sure it is, that where privileges do not lead to good, men pervert them into evil. Outward means, unaccompanied with an inward grace, are among the most fatal deceptions of the present day. And, beyond all doubt, whatever becomes not *the savor of life unto life*; will have *the savor of death unto death*!

Precious LORD JESUS! how sweet is it, when our souls can seek unto thee for relief and comfort, under all our discouragements! Thou art indeed the life, and light; and the sole righteousness of thy people. Oh! grant, that from being stripped of every thing the pride of unhumbled nature might be prompted to take up with after the *Gentile*, and the presumption of any supposed righteousness in the law after the *Jew*; thy redeemed may come under the teaching of thy blessed SPIRIT; and wholly seeking in JESUS, and from JESUS, glory, honor, and immortality, may have eternal life; and with full assurance of faith, *believe the record that GOD hath given of his SON*.

C H A P. III.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is here further prosecuting the Subject respecting the Jews. He proves the full Condemnation of all the World before GOD by the Deeds of the Law. In the close, he sweetly preacheth CHRIST.

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of GOD.

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of GOD without effect?

4 God forbid: yea, let GOD be true, but every man a liar: as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

We cannot sufficiently admire, the very delightful method, the Apostle was led to adopt, in this Chapter, while prosecuting his subject. He puts a question into the mouth of the Church, which he foresaw would arise in the minds of the people, from what he had said, and as instantly answers it. Concluding, that from the levelling principle he had made, of hewing down at one stroke both *Jew* and *Gentile*, as alike unable to justify themselves before GOD, it would stagger the faith of many, who had before conceived, as the Jews

all along had done, high notions of their privileges; he demands, to what good the whole of the dispensation by the law had tended? *What advantage then (saith he) hath the Jew; or what profit is there of Circumcision?* As if he had said, If your statement be correct, that the *Jew* is as far from salvation by the law, as the *Gentile* is by nature; to what purpose was it to be born of the natural stock of *Abraham*, or what use was it for all his children to be circumcised?

The answer to those interesting questions, which the Apostle immediately follows up, in a most ample and satisfactory manner, gives occasion to set forth, in yet stronger features of character, the object he had all along in view, of the utterly lost and helpless estate of every man before God, in any thing of his own. And the great drift from the whole is, to prove the absolute need of CHRIST; and the completeness in CHRIST, in a way of a full, free, and finished justification.

Paul having therefore started the question in the first verse, opens at once in the *second*, to give answer. And he begins with setting forth, the vast advantage the *Jew* had over the *Gentile*, notwithstanding the mercies themselves had, by their abuse of them, been much perverted. And while he observes, that their privileges were every way great, he mentions one, which indeed, more or less, comprehended in its bosom every other; namely, in having the Oracles of his holy Word, which so blessedly set forth, in type and shadow, as well as by absolute promise and prophecy, the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I beg the Reader to pause in this place. And, I would ask him, whether it doth not strike him, that over and above these things, among the many blessed designs in God the HOLY GHOST, when committing the sacred Oracles to the Jewish nation, which contain such abundant proofs and testimonies, of all the leading doctrines of our most holy faith; that this also was a very principal one: namely, to confirm to all the after ages of the Church, *the truth as it is in JESUS*. Who, that reads the Scriptures of the Old Testament with an enlightened eye, but must see the doctrine of the HOLY THREE IN ONE, which bear record in Heaven, shining with full lustre in every Book? Who that hears the Prophets, predicting the coming of the *Messiah*, but must be struck with their witness to the GODHEAD of CHRIST? All, with one voice, bearing testimony to one and the same fundamental truth: *behold your God will come and save you! then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped!* Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5. Luke iv. 16—21. And who that reads so much of the out-pouring of the SPIRIT in the latter day dispensation, upon all flesh; can hesitate to conclude, but that the leading design for which such grace was foretold, was that the minds of the people in the Church of God, might be led to discover, under his Almighty teaching, sweet features of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, of the Eternal SPIRIT? Joel ii. 28. with Acts ii. 17. 1 Cor. xii. throughout.

The Reader may, if he please, accept the foregoing paragraph as if written within a parenthesis. I could not suppress the thought, which involuntarily arose in my mind, from the view, of the sacred Oracles having been all along deposited with *Israel*, for this among other purposes. And, I hope it may be found useful. With such as

call in question those fundamental truths of our holy faith, I cannot suppose it will be interesting. But *the Poor Man's Commentary* is designed for a very different class. James ii. 5. And, all of a contrary complexion, are invulnerable to conviction, untaught by the SPIRIT; neither can they be persuaded, *though one rose from the dead!* Luke xvi. 31.

The Apostle very properly argues, that the unbelief of *Israel*, could not do away God's promises, which were not conditional, for those promises depended not upon the merit of man, but the faithfulness of God. And the instance of *David* is as gracious as it is striking, by way of confirmation. God's promise to *David*, was an absolute unconditional promise, that of *the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne.* Psm. cxxxii. 11. Acts ii. 30. But shall *David's* sin, in the case of *Bathsheba*, do away this promise? God forbid. *Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar.* The LORD must be justified in his sayings. His word must stand. And, if presumptuous men will dare to impeach, either the LORD's word, or his wisdom, in any of his dispensations; he will be found justified and holy in all. Reader! do not overlook by the way the blessedness of this doctrine, as it may be, and as it ought to be, applied, to numberless occasions in life.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

The Apostle foresaw, how ready the carnal, and ungodly, would be, to take offence at this statement; as if the doctrine led to licentiousness. And moreover, the infidel would go further, and charge God with unrighteousness, while punishing for sin, in one instance, while in another, taking occasion from sin, to magnify and display the riches of his grace. But, the Apostle refutes the unjust charge; and, by the plainest statement shews, that it is but just in God to commend his righteousness in pardoning his people, because, in the Person of their glorious Head, he hath received a full equivalent for their transgression. While, on the other hand, God is not unrighteous, when he takes vengeance on the ungodly, who despise redemption by CHRIST; for they stand upon the bottom of self-se-

curity, and consequently fall in the day of judgment. And, in respect to the false and malicious slander, thrown upon the LORD's people, as if they should assert what they totally deny, that they may live as they like; this charge is not so directly levelled at the LORD's people, as it is at the LORD himself. It ariseth from the deadly hatred of the Devil, against CHRIST, and his people. And therefore, he stirs up the minds of carnal men, to be indignant against the sovereignty of JEHOVAH, and against the glorious doctrine of justification wholly by CHRIST. It is these precious truths, which are arraigned at man's bar. It is these things, which excite, both the bitterest hatred of *Satan*, and unawakened sinners. But, to raise the hue and cry against the LORD himself for his dispensations, would be too open and barefaced; and therefore, the charge is brought forward against the LORD's people, as if their doctrines led to licentiousness. Reader! You cannot be a stranger to these things, if you observe what is going on in the present day, among what is called the religious world; for it is precisely the same as it was in the days of the Apostle. Indeed it is a blessed proof, and ought to be regarded as such by the faithful, that the Apostle's faith and practice were the same then, as the faith and practice of the present hour, among the true followers of CHRIST, since they are subject to the same calumny. We know, and our opposers know, that they who from right principles, profess faith in the sole justification by CHRIST, cannot lead lives unsuitable to this precious doctrine. The thing is impossible. For they are regenerated by GOD the HOLY GHOST, live thereby in union with CHRIST, and are followers of GOD the FATHER, as dear children. Hence, they may, and they do, challenge the whole neighbourhood where they dwell, whether they are not *examples of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. 1 TIM. iv. 12. That beautiful Portrait *Paul* hath drawn in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, is the character which every child of GOD seeks for grace to copy after, and to form his life by. *Finally, Brethren, (said he,) whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.* Philip. iv. 8.

9 What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their

tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

The Apostle having very fully answered every objection, and shewn, by the plainest and most incontrovertible arguments, that neither Jew nor Gentile could justify themselves before God, both being in the *Adam*-state of nature, of original sin, and actual transgression; he now calls upon the Church, to consider their situation, under the Gospel dispensation, and demands whether they thought themselves, as to any external privileges, brought into a better state, so as to be able to contribute any thing towards their own justification before God? To which *Paul* answers, both for himself and them, in declaring the contrary. And, as he had before shewn, that both Jew, and Gentile, were proved to be sinners; so the Church, considered in the *Adam*-nature of a fallen state, were equally so before God. And, in confirmation of this, the Apostle quotes at large, what the Scriptures had long before delivered, on this momentous point, which brought in the whole world guilty before God. I earnestly beg the Reader to pause over this subject, and consider its weighty nature. However humbling, yet it is important to be known. For, in proportion to the conviction of it on the mind, so will be, more or less, our real regard to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and his salvation. For the words at the end of this paragraph, *by the law is the knowledge of sin*: See Chap. vii. 7. and Commentary.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:

22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here *Paul* arrives at the great object, which all along he had been preparing to bring in; and in the very mention of which, his whole soul seems to be on fire. Jerem. xx. 9. He had glanced at it before. Chap. i. 17. But here he dwells on it more particularly. And, what he marks as the distinguishing feature of it, is, that it is wholly unconnected with any other, and with every other, principle. *But now*, (saith he,) *the righteousness of God without the law is manifested*; yea, saith *Paul*, it is *witnessed by the law and the prophets*. Both, joyfully give in their testimony, to the compleat, full, and all justifying *righteousness of God, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST*. They gladly minister to proclaim their own nothingness, and *CHRIST's* all-sufficiency, in a way of justification. Reader! I beseech you, pause over this precious testimony, which God the *HOLY GHOST* hath here given, by his servant *Paul*, to the righteousness of God our *SAVIOR*. Look at the law in all its bearings. *By the law*, saith *Paul*, *is the knowledge of sin*. Yes! the law teacheth of sin, shews what sin is; but cannot shew a righteousness which may save from it. This the Gospel only proclaims. And the blessedness of it, and the fulness of it, and the compleatness of it, both the law and the Prophets witness to with joy! Dan. ix. 24. Rom. iv. 9—25.

But, what I beg the Reader also not to overlook, in this precious statement, of the righteousness of God our *SAVIOR*, is, that it is a righteousness so universally suited to the *LORD's* people, in every department, whether babes in *CHRIST*, or old saints of God, that it is unto all, and upon all, that believe, for there is no difference. Reader! calculate, if you can, the immense blessedness of what is here said. *First*, of the righteousness itself, which is wholly of God. Not of man's providing, but of God's appointing. Not of man's merit, but of God's free grace. No predisposing cause but the everlasting love of God in *CHRIST*, having any thing to do in the matter. Yea, faith itself, by which a child of God is made to possess it, and enjoy it, hath nothing of merit by way of recommendation. The *LORD*, who is the sole Author and Giver of this righteousness, is the sole Author and Giver of faith also to receive, believe, and enjoy it. So that faith, as an act of ours, is but the effect, and not the cause; the hand to receive, and not to promote, the vast mercy. The highly favored soul, who is made a rich partaker of the blessing; to

him it is given, to feel his want of righteousness in himself, to behold CHRIST's righteousness as every way suited to himself and his wants, to accept on his bended knees the proffered mercy, and to receive it to the divine glory, and his own happiness.

Secondly. This righteousness, is said to be, *unto all, and upon all, that believe, for there is no difference.* No difference in the thing itself, neither in the application of it. For the LORD, whose it is, gives it to all with an equal hand, and loves all with an equal love, and justifies all with an equal freeness of grace. For, it is not what they are in themselves, but what they are in CHRIST, which makes them the objects of the divine favor. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to have a large hand of faith to receive the larger portions of the grace of belief, to enjoy the LORD's blessings of every kind, with a greater fulness. But our enjoyment is one thing, and the LORD's righteousness, which justifies, another. He that hath little faith, and is in CHRIST, is as completely justified by CHRIST, as he that hath the largest portions of faith to apprehend with greater delight his mercies. *By him,* (saith the Apostle, that is, by CHRIST,) *all that believe,* whether strong believers or weak ones, whether babes in CHRIST, or fathers in the strength of CHRIST; *are justified from all things.* Acts xiii. 39. And the reason is given. For the righteousness which justifies, is alike justifying, *unto all, and upon all.* It is unto them, and upon them; not *within* them, nor *from* them. And therefore, being wholly out of themselves, and nothing within, no inherent holiness in the creature, which some men talk of, but none know; there can be no difference in the receiver, or in the act of justification by the Giver. For, as the Apostle adds in the following verses: *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD.* And, therefore, the justification of all, cannot but be alike the free gift of GOD, and not the smallest difference in man. *Being justified* (saith the Apostle) *freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS.*

In the close of this paragraph, the Apostle dwells very blessedly on the greatness of CHRIST's sacrifice; and on the grace of GOD, in the wonderful ordination of it: and, from the union of both he shews, how JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Persons, may, and indeed doth, justify the believer in JESUS, while preserving his own glory, in the full perfection of all the rights of his justice. *Whom God* (saith he) *hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood.* The Reader will perceive, that I take no notice in this passage of those words, *to be,* which are in Italicks, and which have no business there; for CHRIST was not then to be set forth; for this had been done from everlasting. *The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting.* Prov. viii. 22, 23. And, CHRIST is said to have been, *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world!* Rev. xiii. 8. And CHRIST hath been, and is, and will be, the same, in the perpetual, and unceasing efficacy of his blood, to all eternity.

We do not meet with this word *propitiation,* but three times in all the Bible. Once in this place, and twice in the 1st Epistle of John; Chap. ii. 2. and Chap. iv. 10. CHRIST indeed is both the propitiation and the propitiatory. He is the propitiation, or sacrifice; the propitiatory, or mercy seat and altar, on which that sacrifice was offered; and he is the high priest, or sacrificer; to make the offering.

The Jews were accustomed, on this account, to call the mercy-seat *Ilasterion*. For here, in allusion to all the great events connected with the Person of CHRIST, and his Offices, and Character; the LORD promised to come and meet his people. Exod. xxv. 22. And, in the Person of CHRIST only, can this meeting be, either in time, or eternity. Well might his Name be called Wonderful! For, while all the divine Attributes meet in his Person, and shine in one full constellation; all our sins *meet on him*, (so it is rendered in the margin of our old Bibles, Isaiah liii. 6.) as centering *upon* CHRIST, not *in* CHRIST; and the LORD JESUS washing them all away by his blood. So that CHRIST, in the fullest sense of the word, is the propitiation, and the only propitiation for sin; having by that one offering of himself once offered, *perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Hebrews x. 14.

But, while we thus behold the LORD JESUS in this most blessed point of view, as the full, and only propitiation; it behoves us to be no less attentive, to what the HOLY GHOST hath here said by *Paul*, namely, that it is GOD *who hath set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood*. It is this which endears CHRIST yet more to our hearts. For, indeed, without the hand and appointment of the LORD be seen in it, faith would not find a sufficient warrant to rest upon. But it is very blessed, while we contemplate the perfection of CHRIST's sacrifice for sin; we no less contemplate the authority of JEHOVAH, in the ordination. So that the propitiation which CHRIST is, GOD himself provided. GOD's hand was first in it. GOD himself set it forth: yea, commands his people to accept and trust in. *This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased: hear him*. Luke ix. 35. Reader! I hope you do not fail to enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of those precious things. It is the true joy of all true believers in CHRIST. CHRIST *glorified not himself to be made high priest, but was called of GOD as was Aaron*. Heb. v. 4, 5. From both sources, and securities, we are blessedly taught how it is, that GOD *is just, and the justifier of him, which believeth in JESUS*.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded? By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing *it is* one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The Apostle having shewn, and by means so clear and plain, the way of salvation to be only in CHRIST, and by CHRIST; now returns

back to his original subject, in relation to the total inability of either Jew, or Gentile, justifying themselves before God. And, to do this with greater force of argument, he puts every objection which the weakness, or perversity of the human mind, untaught of God, might bring into the form of questions. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.* Every thing is excluded in the creature, while CHRIST alone is exalted in the infinite greatness, and glories of his Person, and in the infinite merit of his work, in his blood shedding, and righteousness. The *Jew* and *Gentile* are distinctions but in name, while CHRIST is all, and in all. For GOD, as a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, is the GOD of both, in every individual instance of his Church, given by GOD to CHRIST, and chosen by GOD in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. This ancient settlement of eternity took place, not only before the name of Jew or Gentile were known, but before sin had entered into the world to make those distinctions; yea, before the world itself was called into being. And therefore, as the Church of CHRIST had being in CHRIST, from everlasting; the recovery of the Church from the *Adam*-fall by sin, in this time-state of her being, had been all along provided for: and CHRIST's people, whether Jew or Gentile, were his, and the objects of his love, and grace, and favor, from all eternity. So that He that is the GOD in Covenant for the Jew, is also for the Gentile; seeing it is His justification of them, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, and not their different claims to favor, which becomes the cause of their acceptance. And so far is all this blessed and approved way, of being wholly justified by CHRIST, from setting aside the law, that in fact it becomes the only establishment of it. Since it proves, that rather than one jot or tittle of GOD's holy law should fail; the SON of GOD shall fulfil all its righteous demands, and give his soul an offering for sin, for the breaches of it by his people. And, it is the joy of all the redeemed, as well in heaven, as earth, that by the obedience and death of CHRIST, the SON of GOD in our nature, hath done more to magnify, and make honorable, GOD's holy law, than could have been done by the unsinning obedience of the whole creation of GOD, to all eternity. Dan. ix. 24.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold the awful state by nature, both of Jew and Gentile! See, what a portrait to humble our souls to the dust, the LORD the SPIRIT hath twice drawn, in his sacred pages; once by *David*, and here by *Paul*, of our utterly lost, and ruined estate, by nature and by practice; as we stand in ourselves before GOD. And this we are told, was the result of that enquiry, when the LORD looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that would seek after GOD. *All were gone out of the way. All together become unprofitable. None good, no, not one.* And how then could it be otherwise, than while beheld in our *Adam*-nature, and without being considered in CHRIST, *all the world must become guilty before God?*

And, can it need any argument of persuasion, to prompt the heart convinced of this, to look to JESUS; yea, to flee to Him, from the

wrath to come? Am I, are You, convinced of these most unquestionable truths, and do we pause, or remain stupid, and senseless, in the view of these vast concerns? Hath God set forth his dear Son, as a propitiation through faith in his blood; and do we hesitate in the acceptance of it? Is it declared from heaven, that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in God's sight; and are we looking to that quarter, either in whole, or in part, for favor with the Lord? Oh! Sir! if at that awful tribunal, when God cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people, we are found without the righteousness of Jesus, and his propitiation, to be our security; what paleness, what horror, will mark the countenance of every son and daughter of Adam? Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my propitiation, my high Priest, my Altar, the LORD my righteousness *now*: and sure I am thou wilt be my everlasting glory *then*. When law, and justice, in the multitude of breaches I have committed against both, would give in their verdict against me: *Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD!* Oh! the preciousness of that voice now heard by the ear of faith, and then confirmed with the unalterable determination from the throne: *deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom!*

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is prosecuting the same Subject through this Chapter. He brings forward the Patriarch Abraham's Faith, in Proof that there can be no Justification before God, by the Deeds of the Law.

WHAT shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

The Apostle begins this Chapter, at the place he left off in the preceding. Foreseeing that difficulties might be started by some, from what he had advanced, that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in God's sight; all the world being found guilty before him: he adopts an admirable method, to confirm the doctrine, in taking the most unexceptionable character the Scriptures of the Old

Testament could furnish, and in the instance of *Abraham* he shews, that this great father of the faithful, considered in himself, had nothing more to recommend him to GOD than the greatest sinner. *Abraham*, when beheld in relation to the *Adam*-nature in which he was born, was equally involved with all mankind in a fallen state, and belonged as much as any to that race, of whom the word of GOD had decidedly declared, that *there is none righteous, no, not one.*

Paul treats this subject in an unanswerable manner, as proved in the case of *Abraham*. He shews, from the Patriarch's history, that when the LORD first called *Abraham*, to make known to him his sovereign grace and Covenant-mercy in CHRIST; *Abraham* at that time was an Idolater, dwelling in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. Of consequence there could be nothing in the conduct of the Patriarch, which prompted, and called forth the mercy of the LORD. It began, therefore, on the part of GOD; and was altogether free, unmerited, unlooked for, and unsought by *Abraham*. And the simple act, which *Abraham* exercised upon this occasion, at the call of the LORD, was faith in GOD's word, and promise. If the Reader will compare Gen. xii. 1--4. with Heb. xi. 8. this point will appear abundantly plain and evident. And as he prosecutes the Patriarch's history, in the after stages of it, he will next learn, in confirmation of the Apostle's doctrine, what that faith was, which the Patriarch was enabled to exercise; and who was the one great object of it. The LORD called him to *get out of his country, and kindred, and from his father's house*; (all which were shadows of a separation from the *Adam*-nature of a fallen state;) and the LORD promised to make of him a great nation, and that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*: all which referred to the Person, and work of CHRIST.

That these glorious promises wholly referred to CHRIST, and that the Patriarch so viewed them, is evident, from what followed in his history. For thus the HOLY GHOST hath caused it to be recorded, *After these things, the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* Gen. xv. 1. What word of the LORD was this? It could not be the written word; for at that time, the Scriptures were none of them written. It must have been the Essential, the uncreated WORD, which GOD the HOLY GHOST, in after ages of the Church, spake of by his servant *John*, when revealing the SON of GOD. John i. 1. See also Commentary on that scripture. Reader! pause over the subject, for it is precious. Oh! how delightful it is, thus to discover Him, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* Micah v. 2. And, how precious are such testimonies to the GODHEAD of the LORD JESUS!

But, let us not stop here. The Almighty WORD, which thus spake in vision to *Abraham*, declared himself to be *Abraham's shield*, and his *exceeding great reward*. And I need not, I hope, tell the Reader, that these are among the titles of CHRIST. Indeed, they can belong to no other. JESUS, and JESUS only, is the hiding place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest. Isaiah xxxii. 2. And, the Church could mean no other, when she said, in her prayers to JEHOVAH: *Behold, O GOD our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For the LORD GOD is a sun, and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory.* Psm. lxxxiv. 9, 11. And, the LORD is both

the portion of his people, and their God their glory. Deut. xxxiii. 29. Isaiah lx. 19. Hence, in every point of view, the WORD, which came unto *Abraham* in a vision, is proved to have been the ESSENTIAL, UNCREATED WORD, in all the properties of GODHEAD: and considered no less in his Mediatorial-character, he is *Emmanuel*, GOD with us, GOD in our nature, manifesting himself in those characters, as the shield, and the exceeding great reward of his people.

And, what forms another distinguishing feature to be attended to in this history of *Abraham* is, the sense which the Patriarch had of his need of these glorious promises; and the consciousness he enjoyed, of his own personal interest in them. We have our LORD'S own authority, for this most certain conclusion. For JESUS told the Jews, that their father *Abraham* saw his day afar off, rejoiced, and was glad. John viii. 56. A most decided proof, that *Abraham* had clear apprehensions of the Person, and work of CHRIST; and of justification solely by him. So indeed *Paul* told the Galatian Church. *The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying: In thee shall all nations be blessed.* Gal. iii. 8. Hence, there can be no question, but that the Patriarch, in this Gospel, learnt all the great doctrines of redemption by CHRIST; and of his own personal right therein. The same Almighty WORD, which taught *Abraham* in a vision, that he was *Abraham's shield*, and exceeding great reward; taught him no less, that the Patriarch needed both: Hence, the LORD said *fear not*; intimating great cause of fear without them, being in himself a sinner before GOD. And, it was this believing view which *Abraham* had in CHRIST, and the great things to be accomplished by CHRIST, which made *Abraham's* faith so illustrious, and his enjoyment so unbroken. He saw them afar off indeed, but he realized them as near. The promise to him became as sure, as though the whole events included in the promise, had been already accomplished. Hence, he believed GOD. He gave GOD the credit of GOD: and took GOD at his word. The faithfulness of the Almighty Promiser, became security, in his view, for the promise: and, *being strong in faith, he gave glory to GOD; being fully persuaded that what GOD had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

We shall find occasion hereafter, towards the close of this beautiful Chapter, to speak more fully to the circumstances of this righteousness, in which *Abraham*, (and every child of GOD like *Abraham*, of his spiritual seed,) is said to be justified. But in the mean-time, from the view of the subject, as set forth in those verses, we have seen enough to discover, under divine teaching, that the faith of *Abraham*, and the great object of that faith, had respect wholly to CHRIST. *Abraham* was conscious of his fallen state before GOD. He rejoiced in CHRIST'S day, though seen afar off. He knew the whole to be of grace, not of debt. The Covenant transactions, from beginning to end, he was perfectly aware, had no respect to merit, or deservings, in the Patriarch, either in the LORD'S view of *Abraham*, or *Abraham's* view of himself. Hence, the Patriarch was blessed of GOD in this righteousness of CHRIST. *And so then, (saith the Apostle,) they which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.* Gal. iii. 9.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

8 *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

The Apostle in those verses, proceeds to another similar case in point, yet further to illustrate this very important doctrine. He brings forward the prophet *David*, as instructing the Church in one of his Psalms, on the same grounds, of justification before God, in the righteousness of God. And he states this as a point of great blessedness, where God *imputeth righteousness without works*. There are two or three very striking things, in this passage of *David's* Psalm, as quoted and applied by the Apostle, which merit our notice; and I beg the Reader's permission to point them out as they strike me. Psm. xxxii. 1, 2.

First. That it is God's righteousness, and not man's. For, what is imputed from another, cannot in the nature of things be his, to whom it is imputed, until by imputation it is made so. *Secondly.* It being called God's righteousness, when it is CHRIST's righteousness, which is the thing imputed, most decidedly proves CHRIST to be God. *Thirdly.* It being said to be imputed from God without works, plainly manifests, that it is God's free grace, and not man's merit, for which it is imputed. Nothing in the receiver becoming in the least a predisposing cause; but being wholly by grace from the Giver, from beginning to end. *Fourthly.* The blessedness which is said to follow the possession by faith of this righteousness; decidedly shews, the union with CHRIST, from communion in all the benefits of CHRIST; as the in-dwelling sin of nature proves our being descended from *Adam*, by the effects of sin which follow in the same acts of *Adam's* transgression. As, by generation from the first *Adam*, we derive a nature corrupt and sinful: So, by regeneration in the second *Adam*, we are proved to be of the seed of CHRIST, and made *the righteousness of God in him*. 2 Cor. v. 21. *Lastly.* To mention no more; let not the Reader overlook the alteration which the Apostle hath made in those words of *David*, when quoting them in proof, to the support of this doctrine. *David* speaks but of one person. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered.* But *Paul* speaks of many. *Blessed are they* (saith he) *whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered.* But where lies the difference? It is only in the application to the whole Church, both Jew and Gentile, when after redemption-work had been finished by CHRIST, the HOLY GHOST commissions the Apostle, to tell the whole mystical body of CHRIST, that all that are CHRIST's, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, are included in the same salvation. *If ye are CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Gal. iii. 28, 29. I detain the Reader one moment longer to remark, how very sweet those passages in the word of God are, (as is the case here,) when

scripture explains scripture. When the Almighty Author of his most sacred Word, causeth one servant to open and explain, what the Lord had before given by another servant to the Church on those most interesting points. It is what the wise man calls, *like apples of gold in pictures of silver*. Prov. xxv. 11.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet*, being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also;

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had*, being *yet* uncircumcised.

The Apostle having introduced this portion of *David's* writings, by way of confirmation to the doctrine of justification by faith without works, returns again to the history of *Abraham*, to gather further proofs to the same precious truth. He had now fully established the fact itself, that the thing is as he had stated, and that a man is blessed to whom the Lord will not impute sin; and he demands in a way of question, in order to shew that the whole is of grace, and not of works, when this blessedness is first enjoyed? Cometh it, saith the Apostle, after a man is circumcised, or was it before circumcision? And in answering this question he proves most decidedly, from the instance of *Abraham*, that it is perfectly unconnected with any ordinance whatever. For this Patriarch was in a state of justification before God, at least *thirteen years* antecedent to the appointment of circumcision. *Ishmael*, we are told, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised, and it was in the self-same day with *Abraham* his father. Whereas the justification of *Abraham* before God was thirteen years prior to the birth of *Ishmael*. Compare Gen. xvii. 25, 26. with Gen. xv. 1—7.

To what purpose then, it may be asked, was the rite of circumcision? The answer is already given in this very chapter, by the Apostle. It was intended as a sign or seal of God's covenant with *Abraham* and his seed. A mark or badge of separation, for it distinguished all the posterity of *Abraham* from all the earth. But it was

not intended to act as a sign or seal of any promised grace to all the family of *Abraham* in nature. This is very evident from the first day of its observance in the case of *Ishmael*, and very probably others of *Abraham's* house, who were circumcised. Gen. xvii. 27. There should seem to have been a sign or seal intended by circumcision to keep the whole seed of *Abraham* distinct and separate from all the world beside; but while it pointed to CHRIST, and in him had its full accomplishment, though it kept all the seed of *Abraham* in nature in expectation of Him to whom it referred, yet it became no promise to any but to *Abraham's* seed in grace.

And it is worthy the Reader's observation, that as circumcision among *Abraham's* seed acted as an outward sign or badge to all, and yet became no seal of any covenant promise but to CHRIST's seed in grace, so outward ordinances do not convey any inward effects, but to the children of the Covenant in CHRIST. It were devoutly to be wished, that the Church of God in all ages had less respect to mere shadows, and more to substance. What are all ordinances, without an eye to the God of ordinances? What can baptism, or the Lord's supper, benefit a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins? Signs and seals of the Covenant in CHRIST's blood, can only be truly so, to those that are in the Covenant. And, to every child of God, the mere outward ordinance is nothing. His sign, is the Person, blood, and righteousness of CHRIST. And his seal, the work of God the SPIRIT, engraven on his heart, by whom he is sealed, unto the day of redemption. Heb. xii. 24. Ephes. iv. 30.

I will only detain the Reader a moment longer over those verses, to observe what the Apostle saith, of *Abraham* being the common father, and head, of both Jew and Gentile, who walk in the steps of that faith which he had, before he was a *Jew* by circumcision. *Abraham* was a *Gentile*, before he was a *Jew*. And, his justification before God took place, when he was in the Gentilism of an uncircumcised state. Of consequence, therefore, he was the common father of both. And, as such it is an error, to call the Jew the elder brother of the Gentile; and wholly unscriptural. Both are one in *Abraham*, according to the faith. And *Abraham*, and all his spiritual seed, are one in CHRIST. Ephes. i. 4. Gal. iii. 28, 29.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to *Abraham*, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace: to the end the promise might be sure to all

the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

By the *world*, of which *Abraham* is here said to be the heir, cannot be supposed is meant the world, in the general sense of the word, including all mankind; for very frequently in scripture, the world in this view, is spoken of as in opposition to the Church of God. Thus the LORD JESUS, in his prayer for his people, expressly draws a line of distinction, between his Church, and the world; and declares that he prays not for the world. John xvii. 6, 9, 14, 16. And, in like manner, his servants make the same distinction. John i. 10. 1 Cor. i. 21. 1 John ii. 15, 16. But, it is the Church in the world which is here spoken of, such as Jesus himself mentions, John iii. 16. and John vi. 33, 51. And this promise given to *Abraham*, was not, on any account, of a personal nature, because of his righteousness; for, at the time God called him to receive it, he was an idolater. Neither could it be for any obedience to the law; for the law was not given until four hundred and thirty years after. Neither could it be because of circumcision, for this promise was given to *Abraham* more than thirteen years before that was commanded. Hence, it must have been wholly with an eye to CHRIST. And very blessed it is to see, that both *Abraham*, and all his spiritual seed, are made one and the same, on CHRIST's account; and in CHRIST, heirs with the Patriarch, in the same promise. Heb. xi. 9, 10. Romans viii. 16, 17.

I admire the closeness and justness of the Apostle's reasoning, in several of these verses, in which he shews, the blessedness of God's promise, in direct opposition to man's works. *If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void; and the promise made of none effect*. It is of no use for God to promise, if the accomplishment depends upon man's performance of the law. And, as man cannot come up to the law; so man can never attain the promise, if it depends upon his obedience. It is of no use to hold forth any blessings, if those blessings depend upon man's taking them, when they are out of his reach. The prisoner, looking through his iron grate, beholds the liberty of those passing by; but his prison doors preclude him the enjoyment. The law may hold forth liberty, on condition of obedience; but if that obedience be impossible, the liberty is impossible also. Moreover, God's promise is rendered void, if any thing of man's services be taken into the account for obtaining it. But, if both the promise, and the enjoyment of the promise, be of grace, then the grace which first gives, will be manifested in giving power to receive; and thus will it be made sure, to all for whom it is designed. Reader! beg of God to be enabled to form a right value of the promise, which is CHRIST himself in all his fulness, suitableness, and all sufficiency: and beg also rightly to value the absolute gift of God in it, for depending not upon the worth or merit of man, but upon the free grace, and free gift of God in JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed,

even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb :

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ;

21 And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

The Apostle quotes from Gen. xvii. 4, 5. what God had engaged for to *Abraham*. His being made *a father of many nations*, had there been no other assurance on the subject, would have proved, that both *Jew* and *Gentile* were included. For the Jews were but one nation, and distinguished from every other. And, as such, *many nations*, implied what had before been said, *all nations*; that is, all the seed of CHRIST, scattered in all nations, were to be blessed in CHRIST. Gen. xii. 3.

There is somewhat very striking in what is here said, of *Abraham's* faith. *He against hope believed in hope*. The case in itself was hopeless. God had promised *Abraham* a son, from *Sarah*. The Woman, according to the course of nature, was past child-bearing. But what was that to *Abraham*? God had promised it: and that to *Abraham* was enough. Impossibilities are for men; but there is nothing impossible with God. He believed what God had said, God would perform. And this was *Abraham's* faith. Reader! it would be your happiness, and mine, if we could always do the same. It matters not how great soever the promise, when God is the promiser. You and I have nothing to do with the difficulties in the accomplishment. Be the promise ever so great, the obstructions in the way to the fulfilment ever so mighty; yet the faithfulness and power of Him that promiseth, when that Promiser is God, carrieth all before it. *Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain!* Zech. iv. 7. It will be a sweet improvement from this scripture, if the LORD the SPIRIT shall therefrom teach both Writer and Reader, to make the suited improvement from it. LORD! I would pray, that I may have a portion of *Abraham's* faith, upon every occasion through life! Enable me to bring my God's promise, and my God who promiseth, always together. And very sure I am, that then, every difficulty, which seemeth to arise in the way, will disap-

pear. Reader! it was the language of one of old, who had a head-knowledge in these things, though he felt not an heart-influence, and well may those who know the LORD, take up the same precious assurance: *God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numb. xxiii. 19.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

The Apostle makes a very blessed conclusion of this Chapter, by taking into the account, the whole Church; and telling the people, that the occasion of this record, was not so much to aggrandize the great father of the faithful, as it was to encourage all his followers in faith, to imitate his example. *Paul* elsewhere very blessedly saith, in confirmation of the same truth, that *they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.* Gal. iii. 9. And, beyond all doubt, notwithstanding all that is said of this venerable Patriarch, in commendation of his faith; (and too much cannot be said) the humblest and poorest believer is equally interested in all the blessings of CHRIST, in right of redemption. And for this plain reason. All is GOD's gift, not man's worth. The Patriarch had no more faith than what was given him. Hence all he had he owed to the LORD. And all the LORD's children do the same. CHRIST is the alone object of faith, the Author and Finisher of faith. And *by Him all that believe*, whether strong in faith, or weak in faith, *are justified from all things.* Acts xiii. 39.

I said in the former part of this Chapter, that we should find occasion in the close of it, to make observation of the righteousness itself by which *Abraham* was justified, that it might be placed in a clear point of view, and upon its proper basis. And it will be proper to notice it here. Much is said in this Chapter, and in other parts of Scripture, of *Abraham's* faith, and that it was imputed to him for righteousness. But perhaps it is not so generally understood, as the importance of the subject requires, what was imputed to *Abraham* for righteousness. Not his faith surely; for, had this been the case, *Abraham's* faith would have had the merit of works, even the work of faith. And this would have been to have given glory to the creature. A thing in itself impossible. And indeed faith, which is the gift of GOD, and not of a man's own creating, hath but one office, namely, to receive what is offered to faith, and this given freely of GOD to his people. It cannot therefore be the faith of *Abraham* that became his righteousness by imputation. And, moreover, the Apostle saith in those verses, that *it shall be imputed to us also, if we believe on him that raised up JESUS our LORD from the dead.* What shall be imputed to us? Not *Abraham's* faith surely. And yet this must be the sense of the words, if *Abraham's* faith, and not the great object of that

faith, be the thing intended by the expression. Very evident then therefore it is, that CHRIST all along, and his justifying righteousness, is what is spoken of as imputed to *Abraham*, and that the Patriarch was considered as righteous before GOD, in the perfect righteousness of GOD his SAVIOR; and the faith of *Abraham* was looking wholly to CHRIST as his justification, and this became the sole means of his acceptance with GOD, while the ardency of his faith, and belief in it, gave him a great blessedness of enjoyment.

If I detain the Reader a moment longer over these verses, it shall only be to observe the sweetness of what is said in the close of the chapter, that CHRIST was *delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*. Reader! I cannot implore a greater mercy, both for myself and you, than that the blessedness of this scripture may be a living principle of constant joy and peace in our hearts from the power of the HOLY GHOST. There is no guilt left upon the conscience when delivered from the curse of the law by CHRIST on the cross, acting as our Surety and Representative. And there can be no condemnation to his people when sin is done away, in that CHRIST arose from the dead for our justification. For where righteousness in CHRIST is imputed to his people, sin can no more be charged upon the conscience. So that both in the death and resurrection of JESUS, the safety of the LORD's people is secured. There can be no separation from CHRIST, and consequently no interruption to a perpetual justification in him. *He hath wrought out, and brought in, an everlasting righteousness, which is unto all and upon all that believe.* Hence, as the Apostle elsewhere blessedly concludes, *there is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED BE GOD the HOLY GHOST for the boundless condescension of his grace, in explaining to the Church the precious doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law. And blessed be his name, for illustrating the truth yet more abundantly in the instance of the Patriarch *Abraham*. Now, LORD, through thy blessed teaching, we see, wherein the call of GOD consisted, in taking the great father of the faithful from his country and his kindred, and his father's house, to come unto the land which a covenant GOD in CHRIST shewed him. And doth not the same GOD in covenant now command all the Church to forget her own people, and her father's house, that she may be brought into the King's palace? Oh! precious faith, in a precious, precious SAVIOR! LORD! give all thy redeemed grace, that when called upon by grace, like *Abraham*, to go out into a place hereafter to be received as an inheritance, they may, like him, by faith go out, in full confidence in thy grace and mercy.

But let thy people learn, O LORD, from this beautiful illustration of the precious doctrine in the instance of *Abraham*, that the justification of thy Church and people is by CHRIST's person and righteousness, and not our faith. That which was, and is counted for righteousness, is not our faith in that righteousness, but the righteousness itself imputed to the persons of the faithful, from their union and oneness

in CHRIST. By faith in the Person and Righteousness of CHRIST, we do indeed enjoy the blessedness of it, but the work of faith, no more than other works in the creature, can give any title to it. And faith itself comes *from* and is *by* this righteousness. Oh! for grace from the LORD to have a right apprehension of the important distinction. And do thou, blessed LORD! grant to thy whole family the sweet enjoyment of their vast privileges. Neither the circumcision of the *Jew*, nor the uncircumcision of the Gentile, are any thing, where CHRIST and his righteousness are imputed; *Seeing it is One God which justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel, both Jew and Gentile, be justified, and shall glory.*

C H A P. V.

CONTENTS.

The blessed State of a justified Soul. The Subject traced back to the Fall of Adam yet more fully, to shew, that Justification can only be by CHRIST.

THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God:

3 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience:

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Apostle opens this chapter, with shewing some of the immediate blessings arising out of a justified state before God in CHRIST. Having in the preceding chapters most fully and compleatly established the doctrine, and answered every objection, he begins this Chapter with stating the blessedness of it. *First*, He speaks of peace with God. *Secondly*, An access to the throne. *Thirdly*, A rejoicing in the hope and assurance of glory. *Fourthly*, The sanctified use of all afflictions. And, *Fifthly*, the enjoyment of the love of God, the influences of the HOLY GHOST, and communion in all the blessed effects of CHRIST's grace.

I beg the Reader to observe the difference between the righteousness of God in CHRIST, which is the sole *cause* of justification and faith, which is the *effect* of that righteousness, and by which it is en-

joyed. A sinner is not justified by his faith, for, if so, in that case it would be the work of faith; and what difference would there then be, whether the work of faith, or the deeds of the law, became either in part, or the whole, the cause of his justification? The Apostle, in one of the preceding chapters, hath clearly stated the difference between the righteousness of God which justifieth, and the faith of the believer, who by faith enjoys that justification. *The righteousness of God* (saith he,) *which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST unto all, and upon all them that believe.* Chap. iii. 22. It is the righteousness of God which justifies. And this is *unto all, and upon all*; not their act, but the LORD's; not their merit, but the LORD's grace. It is revealed *from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. not procured *by faith*, for faith comes *from it*, and is not the cause of it. For faith itself, as an act of our's, goes no further towards our justification than any other grace. And faith, as well as every other grace, is received wholly from CHRIST, and can constitute no part, no, not an atom, in justification; for this is solely in and by CHRIST.

I have thought it proper to state this doctrine in the clearest manner possible, to guard against any mistake which might arise either here or elsewhere, when the doctrine of justification by faith is the subject. The Apostle did not mean to say, that our justification is by our faith, for he had in the very concluding verse of the former chapter declared, that CHRIST *was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* Hence the act had already past. And the *therefore* with which he begins this Chapter, is the immediate consequence of it. And some indeed read the verse in this way: *Therefore being justified through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by faith we have peace with God.*

Pause, Reader! and contemplate the boundless mercy! We have *peace with God!* peace in the blood of the cross. *We who were enemies to God by wicked works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present us holy, and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight.* Coloss. i. 20, 21, 22. Oh! the blessedness of a justified state in CHRIST! Oh! the comfort, when by faith in CHRIST the soul enjoys it! And we have *access* also by CHRIST's justification to the throne of grace. We are said to *stand* in this grace before the LORD. For by our adoption character, we have the privilege of children, whereby we cry *Abba, FATHER.* An holy boldness, a familiarity at the heavenly court, as those who are well known there, and well beloved there, in CHRIST. Reader! do you know the blessedness of this state, and are you in the daily habit of using it? Oh! Sir! it is a blessed, yea, a very blessed way of maintaining fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST, when by virtue of a conscious justified state in CHRIST, we go often to court, and feel ourselves there as children at home, when in their father's house. And ought it not to be so with every child of God? Hath not Jesus opened this new and living way by his blood? And doth he not dwell in the midst of the throne, to keep it open by his intercession? Oh! then! if you know the LORD, if you are in a justified state in CHRIST, let us make use of our high privilege. *Let us* (saith the Psalmist) *enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.* For

the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations. Psm. c. 4, 5.

But we must not stop here. *Paul* saith also, that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This is a *third* blessed effect springing out of a justified state before God in CHRIST. And I beg the Reader to consider the vast importance of this high privilege. *Paul* himself elsewhere calls it *blessed*. Speaking to *Titus*, he saith, *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.* Titus ii. 13. But it could not be blessed if it was not sure. If any guilt remained on the conscience, fear would damp the hope. Hence the justification here described by the Apostle, is considered by him as full, perfect, and compleat. *We have peace with God. We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.* And in consequence we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, that glory which shall be revealed. When CHRIST, *who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.* See those scriptures, Levit. xvi. 21. Isaiah liii. 6. Rom. viii. 1—39. Dan. ix. 24. 2 Thess. i. 10.

And, Reader, do not overlook that other blessed property arising from a justified state, I mean the sanctified use of all afflictions. A child of God, when by faith he is brought into the knowledge of his adoption, receives all his exercises with a different aspect from men of the world. For afflictions of what kind soever they be, passing through the covenant, come out with an altered property, like waters of the earth, which, by running over certain minerals, take with them qualities of healing. *No afflictions, nor chastenings, for the present are joyous, but grievous; yet, sanctified by grace, they afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.* Heb. xii. 11. But it is a character which belongs to none but God's children justified in CHRIST, not simply to bear tribulations, but to glory in them. And this forms a blessed fruit of a justified state. God the HOLY GHOST, in his gracious office-work, *directs the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST.* 2 Thess iii. 5.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The Apostle here enters upon another sweet view of divine love, as instanced in the great work of redemption. The act itself not only astonishingly great and unexampled, but the time when it was shewn enhancing the mercy. Not simply when we were without any thing to recommend, but when we had every thing to render us odious in God's sight. Not merely undeserving, but ill and hell-deserving creatures. And the thing itself stands on record without parallel. For although in the common circumstances of life, it might perhaps here and there be found that some few of the more noble and generous of mankind would venture their life as a substitute for another, where friendship or the love of applause might prompt to it, yet for a *righteous man*, that is, one that simply doth what is right between man and man, and no more, such instances would be rarely found. But what tends to magnify the riches of grace, and render the case of the death of CHRIST so illustrious and unexampled, is, the consideration that it was done for a set of men who were sinners, and at a time when in the midst of their sins against Him who died for them. It was thus GOD commended his love, and endeared to us his mercy. There is a double manifestation of this love, both in the FATHER's giving his dear SON, and CHRIST offering himself as a sacrifice for the sins of his people.

And the Apostle dwells upon it, by setting it forth under a variety of views. The gift of GOD; the death of CHRIST; the justification by his blood; the reconciliation and peace; the joy in GOD through CHRIST, by whom, and in whom, we have received the atonement. And GOD the HOLY GHOST hath most blessedly caused his servant thus to represent it, in order that the Church might have the higher apprehension of the unspeakable mercy. Indeed, language fails to afford any adequate representation. Had some generous prince pardoned his rebellious subjects, on their returning to their allegiance: Had he purchased their freedom, with an immense sum, when they were in slavery: Had he taken them into his favor, and brought them near himself; These would have been gracious acts in manifesting his munificence and liberality. But what should we have said, had this prince done, as CHRIST, the prince of the kings of the earth hath done, given himself a ransom for them, died for them, shed his blood for them, washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto GOD and his FATHER? What shall we call this? And yet it is in this manner GOD commendeth (that is, bids the Church to take notice and accept of,) his love towards us! Reader! let you and I learn always to accept the FATHER's gift, and JESUS's grace, in this most sweet and precious way. *GOD thus commendeth his love towards us!*

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift, for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgement *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification,

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one, *judgement came* upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Apostle having thus raised up the subject to the highest pitch of excellency, in shewing the blessed state of the soul, in being freely, fully, everlastingly justified in, and by, CHRIST; having received the atonement in the heart, and conscience; being fully applied, and made effectual by the HOLY GHOST; and living *upon it*, having access daily, hourly, to the throne *by it*; and constantly *from it*, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; goes on now, directed

and led by the blessed SPIRIT, to trace back the wonderful subject even to the very fall of man, which involved our whole nature in one mass of ruin, and which none but CHRIST could deliver from. And the Apostle, in various ways, and by various statements, draws a parallel, between the *Adam*-nature of our fallen state, and the grace-union in CHRIST; to shew, (and which he hath done in a very blessed manner,) that as *Adam*, and CHRIST, are the two Covenant heads of each family, the relationship brings with it an union interest, and concern, in all that belonged to each, in this Covenant-character. I very earnestly entreat the Reader, to attend with great diligence to the statement the Apostle hath made. May He who taught *Paul*, teach both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*. For, surely, the Apostle's mind was most blessedly led out in the contemplation, when GOD the HOLY GHOST guided his heart and pen to send this sweet scripture to the Church.

The Apostle begins this part of the subject, in drawing the parallel of the two *Adams*, so called in scripture, (1 Cor. xv. 45.) in order to represent them, as covenant heads of their people. By the sin of the *first Adam*, the whole race were equally involved in the guilt and punishment due to *original* corruption, although they had no hand in *actual* transgression. In like manner, by the righteousness of the *second Adam*, the whole Church became interested, although they bore no part in the vast work, either by personal holiness in themselves, or by obedience to the law of GOD.

This doctrine the Apostle prosecutes through several verses. In the instance of *Adam*, he considers all his children implicated, in all that concerned him. And, as it is said of *Levi*, the descendant of *Abraham*, that *he was in the loins of his father when Melchizedec met him, and blessed him*: Heb. vii. 10. So the whole race of mankind were in the loins of *Adam*, when he transgressed the commands of GOD, and were with him involved in the same condemnation. And equally to be considered must the whole Church be in CHRIST, being *chosen in him before the foundation of the world*. Ephes. i. 4. Hence that sweet promise: *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring*. Isaiah xlv. 3. Reader! pause over this view of the subject, and remember, that it is scriptural. And, do not pass away from it, before that you have fully brought home the doctrine to the mind, under due conviction. You and I both, daily, prove our relationship to *Adam*, from the *Adam*-nature we carry about with us, in the common infirmities of that nature, and the remains of in-dwelling corruption. Have we similar testimonies, in our souls' experiences of our grace-union in CHRIST? It is a grand subject of enquiry. For as it is most certain, that neither of us could have been involved in the sin and condemnation of the *first Adam*, had we not sprung from him by *generation*: So, equally certain is it, that we have no interest in the righteousness and justification by the *second Adam*, even the LORD from heaven, unless we are his in *regeneration*. The transgression of *Adam* the sinner, would never have hurt you, or me, had we not been born from him, and his blood ran through our veins; neither will the righteousness of CHRIST the SAVIOR benefit us, unless we are found new-born in Him, and his Holy Spirit formed in our hearts.

It is very blessed to follow the Apostle, through the several parts of

this Chapter, wherein he hath stated the consequence of things; by virtue of the Church's oneness, and interest with CHRIST. He puts the subject, under various illustrations of it, and in a very beautiful manner goes over it again and again, as if he would have no child of GOD ignorant, on a point of so much importance. He describes the reign of death in *Adam*, and the reign of life in CHRIST, under their different heads; and shews the awful consequence of the *former*, and the blessed effects of the *latter*, as set forth in all the circumstances of mankind. *Death* (said he) *reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* A period of *two thousand five hundred years*, when there was no written law, which by the transgressions of it, might have subjected to the penalty of death. And even on infants also, which never had committed, neither were in a capacity of committing, actual sin. A plain palpable proof of original sin, and death the sure consequence of it. He then argues, and with irresistible force of argument, that if such were the sure events which followed the original apostacy of our nature, in which thousands bore no part; ought not those blissful effects promised to the obedience and blood-shedding of JESUS be equally the privilege of his redeemed, to which they have none of them contributed? If so much evil followed the transgression of one sinner; must it not be equally right, that so much good should be the result from the righteousness of one Almighty SAVIOR? And especially as both the person and sin of *Adam*, carry with them no proportion to the greatness and glory of the Person, and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The *one* a finite creature. The *other* Infinite. The offence of the *one*, in the time-state only of the Church. The righteousness of the *other*, everlasting. The sin of *Adam* of one, that is, of the earth, earthly. The holiness of CHRIST, the LORD from heaven. Reader! ponder well the subject; and see whether, under divine teaching, your conclusion from the whole, will not join issue with the Apostle's; that if such be the reign of sin unto death, arising from the apostacy of our *Adam*-nature; how much greater must be the reign of grace through righteousness, unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! I would say, as I meditate on this sweet Chapter; what hath my GOD wrought for his Church and people? Here I behold the blessedness of a justified state! Peace with GOD; access to the throne, to the mercy seat, to the pardon office of JESUS CHRIST; and a sure foundation for a daily, hourly rejoicing, in hope of the glory of GOD. And, have I this peace? Am I indeed justified freely, fully, everlastingly, in the LORD my righteousness? Hath JESUS made my peace in the blood of his cross? Is it GOD that justifieth me? And shall I not demand with *Paul*, and say: *who is he that condemneth me?* Oh! the blessedness of a justified state before GOD. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT.*

Praises to my GOD and FATHER, for all his Covenant-love from everlasting! Praises to my GOD and SAVIOR, whose Suretyship righteous-

ness hath done more for me in the recovery of my poor nature, in the *Adam*-fall ruin; than all the original and actual transgressions of the Church have done, to cast the redeemed down. And praises to my GOD the HOLY GHOST, in causing this blessed Scripture to be given to the Church; and writing the blessed effects of it in my heart, and the hearts of his people. Oh! for grace, to be in the daily, hourly enjoyment of it, and to live in the constant unceasing dependence upon it. *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

The Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, shewn to be a Doctrine of Godliness. And so far is it, in its Nature and Consequences, from leading to Licentiousness, that it is here proved to be the only Foundation for an holy Life in CHRIST.

WHAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

II Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Apostle having finished, in the *five* preceding Chapters, the great subject he had been upon, and having proved, with the clearest and fullest evidence, that justification before God, is wholly in, and by, CHRIST; begins at this Chapter to follow up the blissful doctrine, in shewing the gracious effects which flow from it. And well aware, how much the pride of the *Pharisee*, (which in his own person he had once so deeply felt,) would take alarm at the doctrine of free grace; and no less the profligacy of the carnal, would attempt to draw improper conclusions from the divine mercy, displayed in so rich a manner as in justifying the sinner without works: the Apostle opens the subject with putting a question into the mouth of both, yea, all classes of unbelievers, and such, as the Apostle knew, none but persons of their characters would venture to propose. If it be true, say they, that God doth all, and man doth nothing, towards his own justification; *shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* Shall we not live as we list, and run on in accumulating transgressions, that God's grace may, (as *Paul* saith it doth,) more abound, where sin hath abounded? Dear *Paul!* hadst thou lived in the present day of the Church, and have seen as we see, thy sweet truths, taught thee by the HOLY GHOST, wiredrawn by many of the various professors; divinely inspired as thou wert, when writing this Epistle, thou wouldest hardly have escaped the odium which is thrown upon those who subscribe, with full consent of soul, and from the same teaching, to the doctrines of free grace!

But, Reader! observe, with what abhorrence, what holy indignation, the Apostle instantly refutes the foul calumny. God *forbid*, saith he. It is as if he had said: Is there, can there be a man upon earth, capable of drawing so base and ungenerous a conclusion? Would any man in common life, make the experiment of breaking his bones, because some kind and skillful surgeon would immediately heal them? Is this the way to reason, in the affairs of things relating to the present life? And shall we so argue, in respect to the things of a better? Because God, in a rich, free, sovereign mercy, hath provided a remedy, for the recovery of his Church from the *Adam-fall* transgression, whereby the LORD himself will accomplish the whole, and man shall have nothing to perform in it but to receive the blessing: shall this bounty in God tend to increase the sin in man? Is it not as plain as words can make it, that God's design by this reign of grace, is to destroy the reign of sin. *The SON of GOD was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.* And God's glory, in this instance, can only be promoted, where sin is destroyed. It is the want of grace, which makes men sin; and not the abounding of grace which can tend to increase it. Reader! I pray you to attend to the subject, as the Apostle hath stated it. And, if the LORD be your teacher, I will be bold to say, that you will discover, how unanswerable the conclusions of *Paul* are, in proof, that so far is the free grace of GOD in CHRIST, from opening, as some say, the flood-gates of sin; it is the only preservative to keep them shut. By this grace only, all

truly regenerated believers in CHRIST, are upheld from the breakings out of indwelling sin, which remain in that body of sin and death, the best of men carry about with them. *For, if* (as the Apostle elsewhere saith) *CHRIST be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.* Rom. viii. 10. *And how* (as the Apostle demands,) *shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Not dead *in* sin, for that is the state of the unawakened, unregenerated; being so by nature, and so remaining, while in the condition of unrenewed nature. Neither dead *for* sin, for CHRIST only hath died for sin, *the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.* 1 Pet. iii. 18. But dead *to* sin. And, which is the case of every regenerated, justified, sanctified believer, they are dead to the *guilt* of sin: for that is done away by the blood of CHRIST. Ephes. i. 7. Micah vii. 17, 18, 19. Isaiah liii. 5. Col. ii. 13, 14. Rev. i. 5, 6. They are dead to the *dominion* of sin. Verse 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. *And how then shall they live any longer therein;* when the very principle which gave life to it in the heart, is destroyed? True, indeed, the child of God goeth humbly all his days, from feeling the remains of indwelling sin, and which he knoweth will never be wholly taken out, until death. Like the ivy in old walls, until the whole falls down, the root will remain. But grace keeps low the sproutings. And his consolation is, that though sin is in him; yet, through grace, he lives not in sin. *His life is hid with CHRIST in God. And when CHRIST who is his life shall appear, he will also appear with him in glory.* Coloss. iii. 4.

The Apostle having answered the unwarrantable, and unjust objection made by some to the doctrine of free grace, on the ground of its being supposed capable of inducing licentiousness; advanceth yet further, to shew the sanctity of life and conversation, among justified believers, from the doctrine of baptism. And the Apostle proposeth what he had to offer on this ground, in the form of a question, as a thing perfectly well known and received. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into CHRIST were baptized into his death? Therefore,* (said Paul,) *we are buried with him by baptism into death. We are planted together in the likeness of his death. Our old man is crucified with him. The body of sin might be destroyed.* And hence, he draws conclusions the most just and proper, that a new life in CHRIST must be the sure consequence of these things.

I cannot propose to enlarge on every particular the Apostle hath here stated. It would swell our pages too much. But it will be sufficient to observe, that as *Paul* refers the whole of what he advanceth, as so many consequences arising out of baptism; it must follow, that he could mean no other than the baptisms of the HOLY GHOST. Water baptism, under whatever form administered, could never produce such blessed effects. The regeneration of the soul is the only cause of life, for being planted in the likeness of CHRIST's death; and the only way by which the old man of sin becomes crucified with CHRIST. And very blessed it is, when, from the baptism of the HOLY GHOST at regeneration, the soul is quickened, which was dead in trespasses and sins; and is led to trace, that grace-union with CHRIST, whereby, from the FATHER's gift, before the foundation of the world, being chosen in him, now in the time-state of the Church,

CHRIST hath accomplished the salvation of his people; and God the SPIRIT, by the washing of regeneration, brings the soul from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan, to the living God. Ephes. i. 4. Coloss. i. 13, 14. Titus iii. 4—7.

I cannot refrain, however, from detaining the Reader to a short observation on that sweet verse, where the Apostle, speaking of a oneness, and union, and interest in CHRIST, declares our participation both in the death and life of JESUS. *Now, (saith he,) if we be dead with CHRIST, we believe that we shall also live with him.* Reader! pause and calculate if you can, the blessedness of both states. *Dead with CHRIST!* When JESUS died on the cross, he died as the Head and Husband of his body the Church. He hung there the Public Representative of his Spouse, for whom he died. And every individual member of his mystical body was crucified with him. Precisely as our first father in the garden, when he sinned, all his natural seed then in his loins, sinned in him, and with him; and were equally involved in all the eventual consequences of that sin: So, in like manner, when CHRIST died for sin on the cross, all his spiritual seed were in him, and partook in all the blessedness of it; that is to say, in all the benefits of it, while He alone had all the glory.

Now then, (saith Paul,) if we be dead with CHRIST, we believe that we shall also live with him. And, without all question, his seed, his people, have an equal privilege in all the benefits of his life, as they have in his death. *Because I live, (saith JESUS,) ye shall live also.* John xiv. 19. Yea, they are united to him, and are one with him. The Person of CHRIST, that is, God and man in one, is united to every believer. And every believer, body, soul, and spirit, is united to the Person of CHRIST. John xvii. 21—23. 1 Thess. v. 23.

I must not stay to remark the numberless blessings which arise out of this most precious truth; but I beg the Reader not to pass away from the view of it, until he hath taken with him one or two observations, which when realized in the soul, will tend to make the subject very blessed.

Believers in CHRIST live with CHRIST, by virtue of their union with JESUS, and communion with JESUS in his righteousness, as justifying them before God. Accepted in the beloved, they are pardoned, and justified freely, in a perfect, uninterrupted, and everlasting righteousness: so that when CHRIST *who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory.* Coloss. iii. 4.

And as, from an union with CHRIST's Person, the believer in CHRIST is justified in his righteousness: So is he also *sanctified* in CHRIST's holiness. Indeed CHRIST is made of GOD unto all his people, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that all the glory may be in the LORD.* 1 Cor. i. 30. And, it is very blessed to see, how all the Persons of the GODHEAD concur in this great design. God the FATHER hath from the beginning chosen the Church to salvation, through sanctification of the SPIRIT; to the obtaining of the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. 2 Thess. ii. 13. Jude 1. 1 Pet. i. 2. John xvii. 19. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

And, as the Church lives with CHRIST during the present time-state of grace, both in his righteousness to justify, and in his holiness to sanctify; so all the body is interested in the life of glory, which he is gone before to prepare for them. Indeed, the grace in CHRIST here is

the same as the glory to be revealed hereafter. The only difference is, that the one is suited for the life that now is, and the other for that which is to come. But, the blessing itself is as much the believer's portion now, as it will be then. In this sense, as well as many others, it may be said: *he that hath the Son hath life.* I John v. 12. And what a blessed state is the whole, from justification to glory!

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

If we read the Apostle's words in this passage, more in the way of promise than precept, we shall enter the better into the beauties of it. When *Paul* saith, *let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body*; he cannot be supposed as implying any power, or ability, in ourselves, to check the risings of sin by our own exertions. This would be, to make the grace of God, dependent upon the will of man. The same Apostle elsewhere expressly saith, that *it is through the SPIRIT believers mortify the deeds of the body and live.* Rom. viii. 13. And, I hope the Reader is not now to learn, that temptation to sin is not far away, if the HOLY GHOST were for a moment to remit his support. But, the words of the Apostle seem to be in the way of exhortation, where the precept is blended with the promise. To this, the Church answers: *hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: yea, my delight shall be in thy statutes.* Psm. cxix. 117. And, what a blessed promise follows? *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* And, Reader! what a blessed state would that Church, that believer be in, who daily acted faith upon this promise? And are not all such promises to be lived upon by truly regenerated, justified believers? Was it not God's grace, which took away, in the first instance, the dominion of sin? And is it not now the same grace, which must prevent all the after risings of sin, in struggling for dominion? That which gave victory then, can only give victory now: And wherefore? But *because ye are not under the law, but under grace!*

I beg the Reader not to lose sight, (for the Apostle doth not,) of

the handle which the Pharisee, or the carnal, would make of this doctrine. But it is such characters, and such only, which raise this cavil. No child of God with grace in his heart, can act but from that grace, in all his deliberate purposes. The Lord hath put his fear in his heart, that he shall not depart from him. Jerem. xxxii. 40. And this child-like fear, becomes the most persuasive of all motives, to love and obedience. They knew nothing, either of the child-like fear, or child-like love, which dwell in the heart of the regenerate, that can suppose what becomes the strongest check to sin, should encourage to the commission of it.

17 But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

I pause over this verse to consider it alone, as it stands, in my view, unconnected with every other. And, I do it the rather, because I am free to confess, that I have never yet seen any Writer, which hath given to my satisfaction the full sense of it. I should observe, that the words, as they stand in our translation, are perfectly correct, and in exact agreement to the original. There is no possibility, without injury, to add to the verse itself, or to take from it. *Paul* thanks God, that they were in times past *the servants of sin*. But now, were in obedience, from the heart; that is, were now regenerated. Some read the passage: God be thanked that *though ye were the servants of sin*. But certain it is, that the original favors no such latitude of construction. But, say you, can it be thought, that the Apostle would thank God, that they had been in the drudgery of Satan, wearing his livery, and doing his service? Could this be a motive of thankfulness? To which in answer, I say, without deciding positively upon it; if the Lord's glory be the more advanced, and sin, which in itself is a deadly evil, working nothing but death, and everlasting ruin; be overruled, for bringing about greater glory to God, and greater happiness to man; it then puts on a different aspect. Just as poison is sometimes made a sovereign medicine for healing: and sickness, when sanctified, hath been found a means, under the Lord, of changing the heart. The sin of *Adam*, laid the foundation for the manifestation of *CHRIST*, as a *SAVIOR*. The *SON* of God would have been known as the Head and Husband of his Church, had sin never entered into the world: for he betrothed her to himself from everlasting. Hosea ii. 19. But as the Redeemer, the Church would never have known him, had not her shame in sin, afforded an opportunity for the display of his glory, in washing her from her sins in his blood! And in this case, all those sweet songs in heaven would have been lost, which the redeemed now chaunt aloud, and will be sung by the Church for ever. Rev. v. 9. For myself, if I know any thing of my own heart, I hope that I can truly say, I hate sin, I would not willingly and wilfully commit a single sin for the world: yea, I loath myself in my own sight for sin, the sin of my poor fallen nature. And sin becomes more bitter to me, as *CHRIST* becomes more precious. But, with all this, I say, I would rather be a sinner saved, and saved in such a way as I am saved in, by the blood and righteousness of the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*; than to have never known sin, neither known

CHRIST as a SAVIOR. Angels in heaven, which have never sinned, may, and do, praise JEHOVAH for his glory, and their happiness: but no angel can know JESUS, and love JESUS, for the same cause as a poor sinner can; and for which his name is called JESUS: *he shall save his people from their sins.* Matt. i. 21. I therefore can accept the Apostle's words in this verse, just as they are; and find cause to bless GOD, that I was once darkness, and in the shadow of death, when the SON of GOD came and brake my bands asunder. Like the poor man in the parable, having lain at the gate in a state of nature, full of wounds and sores; I can now better value a state of grace in the LORD JESUS, having been cleansed and healed in his blood. And, having once known by deep affliction, what it was to be miserable in sin; I now can better tell what it is to be everlastingly blessed and happy in CHRIST. GOD *be thanked*, (saith Paul,) *that ye were the servants of sin.* And GOD *be thanked*, my soul makes her responses to *Paul's* words, and adds, that by the regeneration of the HOLY GHOST, the soul-union with CHRIST, and the gift of the FATHER to his dear SON; by grace I am enabled to obey from the heart, that form of doctrine which hath been delivered.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life:

23 For the wages of sin *is* death: but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader! when the Apostle saith, as in the opening of these verses: *Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness;* we must be cautious not to carry the sense too far. You and I are not wholly free from sin. So far from it, that it is my constant sorrow, that I am so much the subject of sin. I know, I feel, I carry about with me, a body of sin and death. In thoughts, and words, and actions, how often do I feel the working of sin in my nature. And, so little am I become a servant of righteousness, that my daily complaint at the close of the day is, how little have I lived to the divine

glory. But, the Apostle doth not mean, by the freedom from sin in the *one* instance, or the servant of righteousness in the *other*, a state of perfect holiness before GOD. All that is intended from the words of the Apostle is, that by virtue of redemption in CHRIST, his people are delivered from the condemning power of sin, and are brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD. And as such, they have their fruit, that is, the blessed effects of CHRIST's redemption unto holiness, even the holiness of GOD our SAVIOR, theirs by virtue of union and communion with Him; and the end everlasting life. Grace here, a sure earnest of glory hereafter.

And, I admire the very striking manner in which the Apostle sums up the Chapter, when drawing the nice, but proper distinction between sin, in its final consequences; and righteousness in CHRIST, as the believer's portion for ever. The Apostle calls the end of sin *wages*, and declares those wages *to be death*. For, as a servant covenants with his master, to receive wages at the end of his labor: So, the sinner as truly covenants to receive death, which is his just wages, when at death he stands forth at the judgment seat of CHRIST. But, the Apostle varies the expression with respect to the LORD's faithful servants, when describing the eternal life, which will succeed to the present life. He doth not call it *wages*, but a gift: because it is not earned, but given. Not the demand of merit, but the blessing of grace; the LORD's free, voluntary, and gracious act, as his gift. The gift of GOD, which is eternal life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us both learn from this most blessed Chapter, how to answer the character, of every description, who ventures, from the pride or corruption of his heart, to charge the doctrine of free grace with a tendency to an unholy life. Never, surely, were the motives to an upright and conscientious conversation ever found in the least powerful or persuasive in the soul, until brought home to the soul, in the death of CHRIST. And the child of GOD, who is dead with CHRIST, baptized into CHRIST, and buried with CHRIST, in his death; cannot but feel from the HOLY GHOST, an implanted conformity to the likeness of CHRIST, so as to bear part with CHRIST in his resurrection, and walk in newness of life. And, what dominion shall sin have over that soul in whom the HOLY GHOST dwells, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin? What shall tend to mortify the deeds of the body, but living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT? Blessed SPIRIT of holiness! give grace thus to live, and walk, that we may manifest to all gain-sayers, thy people are dead to sin, and cannot live any longer therein!

But oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! while seeking daily, hourly, grace from the HOLY GHOST, to adorn the doctrine of GOD my SAVIOR, in all things: never, never, for a moment may my soul forget, that the whole, and every part of redemption-work, and redemption glory, is thine. GOD be thanked that we were the servants of sin. And that the whole Church, both in heaven and earth, are brought

out of this prison-state, is all of grace. And do thou, dearest LORD, cause me to, have my redemption by thee, always in remembrance! May my soul be more and more humbled to the dust before thee, that my GOD and SAVIOR may be more and more exalted. Through life, in death, and for evermore, be it my joy to acknowledge, that there can be no wages mine, but the *wages* of sin, which is death: and all the LORD bestows, even eternal life, with all its preliminaries can only be the free, the sovereign, the unmerited *gift* of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

C H A P. VII.

CONTENTS.

Under the Similitude of the Marriage State, the Apostle in the opening of this Chapter, represents the Power of the Law, over a Man that is wedded to the Law, as long as he liveth. But as in the Married State, the Death of one of the Parties destroys that Law; so CHRIST hath delivered his Church. The Apostle closeth the Chapter, in an affecting Representation of the workings of Sin in the Flesh.

K NOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to *her* husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband,

3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should

serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

The Apostle is here particularly addressing the Jews, who were well acquainted with the binding obligation of the law. And he brings forward the marriage state, by way of illustrating his argument, that the obligation to the law, like that between a man and his wife, continued in full force the whole term of life. For, a woman which hath an husband, is bound to that husband during the whole of his life. But, if he dies, the obligation is cancelled. Her marrying then, becomes no breach of chastity: the former contract is done away. This is a well-known law in common life, and indeed is founded on the law of GOD. It can need no further illustration. From hence then, the Apostle argues, that believers in CHRIST being dead to the law as a covenant of works, and the law dead to them; they are both lawfully and honorably married to CHRIST: and the evidence of this union appears, from bringing forth fruit unto GOD, from the graces of the SPIRIT, which in regeneration they receive. Thus the legal right of the thing is fully proved, even when considered only under the common acceptation of the customs among men, which are going on every day in ordinary life.

But, we must not stop here, in our view of the Apostle's figure. In the relation to CHRIST, and his Church, it ceaseth indeed to be a figure, for it is a blessed reality. The marriage between CHRIST and his Church, (of which every other among men is but a type,) carries the subject infinitely higher. For, the SON of GOD betrothed his Church to himself before the foundation of the world, and that for ever. Hosea ii. 19. Ephes. i. 4. And GOD the HOLY GHOST preached this great truth to the Church, from the beginning of the creation of GOD. *And the LORD GOD said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him.* And, when the woman was created from the man, and brought unto him, and were married; this union was declared to be a type and figure of CHRIST's union with his Church. So *Paul* was directed by the HOLY GHOST, in after ages, to explain this wonderful subject. And so he hath done it, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*. *This is a great mystery, (saith the Apostle,) but I speak concerning CHRIST, and his Church.* Compare Gen. ii. 18. 21—25. with Ephes. v. 23 to the end.

Hence therefore, it will follow, that CHRIST and his Church were One before the foundation of the world: that the Church was raised up to be an help meet for him, through all the departments of nature, grace, and glory: and all this, in an union, never to be dissolved. So that in this sense, as the Head, and Husband of his Church, he hath always lived, and is always living. And so it is written, *For thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the HOLY ONE of Israel, the GOD of the whole earth shall he be called.* Isaiah liv. 5.

Neither in this sense hath there ever been, or can be, a divorce. For, although we read of the continued provocations of the Church, by reason of her adulteries; and the LORD, (speaking after the manner of men, while beholding her in her whoredoms,) saith: *Plead with you mother plead, for she is not my wife; neither am I her husband:*

yet in the same moment bids her return, because *he had betrothed her to him for ever*. Hosea ii. throughout. But we no where meet with any bill of divorce, the LORD had given her to put her away; though he demands any to shew it. Yea, the LORD, in the after days of his flesh, when openly tabernacling among his people, declared, that the doctrine of divorce was from *Moses*, on account of the hardness of men's hearts: but, (saith the LORD,) from the beginning of the creation it was not so. And, what GOD *had joined together, no man should put asunder*. It is JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Persons, hath made Him, who is *fellow to the LORD of Hosts*, and the Church, one from everlasting: and nothing can arise in the time-state of the Church to separate. I cannot stay to write down all the scriptures which might be brought forward, in proof to this most blessed of all truths; but I earnestly beg the Reader, before he goes further, to turn to them in his Bible, according to the order in which I have marked them; and if the LORD be his teacher, the glorious doctrine will appear to him with full evidence. Prov. viii. 22—31. Ephes. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Psm. xlv. 13. Ezek. xvi. throughout. Hosea iii. 3. Isaiah l. 1. Rom. xi. 1, 2. Malachi ii. 15, 16. for *treacherously*, read as in the margin, *unfaithfully*. Mark. x. 2—9. Jeremiah iii. 1. and 14.

When this view of the original, and eternal marriage of CHRIST and his Church is well understood, and established by scriptural evidence in the mind; we then go on to prosecute the Apostle's beautiful illustration of the subject, as it relates to the government of the Church, during the time state of the law. *The law*, (we are told by the same authority, in another part of his writings,) *was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made*. And it acted as *our Schoolmaster unto CHRIST*. *But when faith is come we are no longer under a Schoolmaster*. Gal. iii. 19, 24, 25. Nothing could have been more happily chosen than this figure, to illustrate the great truth the Apostle had in hand. By the coming of CHRIST, the Church's lawful husband, he demands his lawful wife. And, by the work of GOD the SPIRIT in her heart in regeneration, *we are now delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. Sweet and precious thought! All the rigor of the law, all the threatenings of the law, its curse and condemnation, as the ministration of death; all are done away in CHRIST. CHRIST, as the Church's husband, surety, and head, *hath redeemed her from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her*. And the Church, brought by sovereign grace to the knowledge and enjoyment of her high privileges in CHRIST, saith: *I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now*. Gal. iii. 13. Hosea ii. 7. See Mark x. with the Commentary.

7 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the command-

ment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The Apostle, all the way along is expecting, from Pharisaical pride and carnal reasoning, continual objections to those precious truths; and therefore stops to answer all, that such men may bring. You will say perhaps, (saith he,) that under such views, is it not making God's holy law the foundation for sin, when you charge it as exciting *motions of sin in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death?* If the law of God stirs up in me, a disposition to offend; is not this charging the law as the cause of sin? To which *Paul* answers, with an holy warmth of indignation, God forbid! The law, by acting as a bridle to restrain, when it gives out its commands and threatenings, can never surely be charged as the cause to evil, because our corruptions are thereby more provoked to offend. When a man throws up a fence, to check the torrent of waters; his wisdom is not impeachable, because those waters swell, and rage the more by the opposition. The sun is not chargeable with improperly shedding its warmth and sweet influences, because reptiles take advantage thereof, to bring their spawn into life, under its incubation. In like manner, the holy law of God loseth nothing of its holiness, because our ruined, undone, and unholy nature finds occasion, from the purity of its precepts, to manifest the greater opposition to it, by our impurities.—Reader! pause a moment to observe, and to observe with great solemnness, to what an awful state our whole nature is reduced by the fall! To such an extent indeed, that the very means the Lord hath adopted to shew to man his misery, the sinner perverts into a greater occasion of testifying the desperately wicked state of his heart! Oh! who knows, who can calculate, or fathom the depth of human depravity? What man hath ever arrived at the bottom of it, so as to have equal apprehensions to what it really is, of *the plague of his own heart?* Reader! If you and I ever make any progress, under divine teachings, in this first, and most important of all sciences; we must not

wait to learn our lessons from discoveries of common sins, and transgressions. These, through grace, may be learnt daily, and alas! too often there is occasion afforded to learn them hourly in the events of life. *For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.* Prov. xxiv. 16. But, when the LORD layeth judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, in our most holy things; who shall calculate the iniquity found there? Isaiah xxviii. 17. Sir! It is a solemn thought, but as certain as it is solemn, that were it not for our Almighty High Priest (as Aaron represented him of old,) bearing away the iniquity of our offerings to the LORD; the best services, and the best prayers, presented by any of the Adam-nature in our fallen state, would call forth everlasting condemnation! Exod. xxviii. 38. JEHOVAH hath said: *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.* Sanctified by them in CHRIST, or sanctified upon them in their destruction, as Nadab and Abihu were, when offering strange fire. Levit. x. 1, 2, 3. Oh! the unspeakable mercy of Heaven, that sin-bearing Lamb of God to bear away the iniquity of our most holy things into a land not inhabited! Levit. xvi. 21, 22. Oh! the grace, and to the praise of the glory of that grace, which hath made us accepted in the Beloved! Ephes. i. 6.

The Apostle prosecutes the subject yet further, under the same view, of the holiness of God's law condemning the sinner; and to take off all possible objections in the illustration of the doctrine, he brings forth the argument as if against himself. *I had not known sin (saith he) but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.* Paul here speaks in his own person, and of himself, looking back to the days of his Pharisaical righteousness. The time when he had a very high opinion of himself; and as he saith, *he was alive without the law once.* Not that he was ignorant of the law of God from his youth: for *he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers; and was zealous towards God.* Acts xxii. 3. But the meaning is, that he had not, in those days, the least knowledge of the spirituality of God's law. He was alive, in a cheerful confidence of his good estate before God; and by an outward attention to things, as they appeared before men, he considered himself very praise-worthy, and within a few steps of Heaven. Reader! if there be a delusion upon earth, one more common than another, this is the one! How little do such men know of the plague of their own heart!

But Paul goes on. *When the commandment came, (saith he,) sin revived, and I died.* What doth he mean? When the commandment came! Why the commandment was in the world ages before Paul was born. He could not mean, therefore, that he had never heard the commandment before! But the sense is, that the law was never brought home to his conscience by the powerful hand of God the HOLY GHOST until his memorable conversion. Then the LORD, for the first time, opened his eyes to the right apprehension of the law, and to the right knowledge of himself, as a sinner before God: and the consequence was, that all those high towering thoughts which he had conceived of his own goodness, fell to the ground, and he himself fell with them a self-condemned sinner before God. Reader! what know you personally of these things? Hath the same LORD which taught

Paul, taught you? Hath GOD the HOLY GHOST brought you acquainted with the anatomy of your own heart, and dissected to your view all its foldings? Hath the LORD laid open the workings of it, and made you out of love with it, as he did *Paul*? If so, you will find cause to bless the LORD for such a portrait as he hath caused the Apostle here to draw of himself; in which every man, taught by the same Almighty Master, and brought up in the same school, may discover his own features. For, (as the wise man saith,) *as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.* Prov. xxvii. 19.

14. For we know that the law is spiritual : but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15. For that which I do I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me ; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man :

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members,

24 O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.

I have not interrupted the Reader with making observations as we have passed through those verses, for they are too plain to need any ;

but in the close, I would now gather the whole into one view, and ask, if there can be a more humiliating account given of human nature, than what the Apostle hath here opened of himself? Let the Reader notice the strength of the expressions, *sold under sin*; consenting unto the law *that it is good*, but in the same moment acting in direct opposition to it; *delighting in the law of God after the inward man*, but *with the flesh serving the law of sin*. Some have thought, (that is, such as were never taught, as *Paul* was, the plague of their own heart), that the Apostle could not be speaking of himself, but of some other person: or, if of himself, that he referred back to the days of his unregeneracy. But, nothing can be more plain, than that it is *Paul's* own history he writes, and his own experience in the very moment of writing; and which the HOLY GHOST taught him to instruct the Church concerning. And sure I am, that every child of God, savingly called of God, and long taught of God, as *Paul* was when he thus committed to writing what daily passed in his heart, will not only bear testimony to the same; but bless God the HOLY GHOST for the history, for it is most precious.

Let any, yea, let every child of God, in whose spirit the HOLY GHOST bears witness that he is born of God, examine what passeth daily in the workings of his own breast, and see whether he is not conscious, as *Paul* was, of the two different principles by which he is directed. The *I*, the Apostle speaks of, that is, the unrenewed body of sin and death, which is carnal, and sold under sin: and the *I*, that is the inner man, which is regenerated and renewed day by day! Surely there is not a man alive, truly born of God, and savingly called by the HOLY GHOST, but must be conscious of those two distinct and opposite principles in himself. And indeed the HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to judge of his Almighty work of regeneration, by this very conflict between nature and grace, between flesh and spirit. *For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Gal. v. 17. So far is this statement the Apostle hath made of himself to be supposed as referring to the days of his unregeneracy, that until he was regenerate he had no consciousness of any warfare, neither indeed was there in his life, or can there be in any man's life, while remaining in the state of an unawakened nature. *Paul* saith himself in this very Chapter, that he was alive once, before the commandment came in this convincing light in which he saw it by regeneration. It was then only, when brought under the teachings of GOD the SPIRIT, that the commandment came, and all *Paul's* self-righteousness fell to the ground!

Pause, Reader! and take a leisurely review of the whole. Here is the great Apostle *Paul*, mourning and groaning over a body of sin and death; in which he declares, dwelt no good thing. He had been savingly converted, and miraculously called by the LORD himself before this, for more than *twenty years*. He had, during that time, been caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words. 2 Cor. xii. 2. He had been called by CHRIST, as a chosen vessel, to bear the LORD's name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Acts ix. 15. And he had been especially ordained to the ministry by the HOLY GHOST. Acts xiii. 2. Such was the man, whose

history we have been reading in this Chapter. And what is the sum and substance to be gathered from the whole under divine teaching, but this: (and which most plainly the LORD the SPIRIT designed for the instruction of the Church from it:) all the LORD's people, after all their attainments, are in themselves nothing. In the LORD alone have we righteousness and strength! It is very blessed to learn our own nothingness, that we may the better know how to value CHRIST's all-sufficiency!

We must not conclude our view of the Apostle here, without first noticing the lamentable cry he put up, in the contemplation of his sinful nature. *Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He did not thus exclaim, as if at the time unconscious how, or by whom, he should be delivered from it. For he immediately adds, *I thank God through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* And long before this, he had told the Churches of his safety in CHRIST. He knew whom he had believed. His hope in CHRIST was blessed. His crown of righteousness was always in prospect before him. Philip. i. 20, 21. Titus ii. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. But, while he was perfectly assured of his everlasting safety in CHRIST, he could not but daily mourn under the remains of in-dwelling corruption, which followed him as the shadow doth the substance. There is a great beauty in the Apostle's expression, in calling sin *the body of this death*, if it be as hath been said, that *Paul* then writing as he did to the *Romans*, alluded to a well-known custom among that people, who in cases of murder, punished the murderer by fastening the body of the person he had killed to his own; so that he was compelled to drag it about with him wherever he went. It lay down with him, and he raised it with him when he arose: so that it haunted his guilty conscience, and poisoned the air he breathed, by day and night. And such is the case of sin. For, every sinner is a soul-murderer, for he hath by sin destroyed himself. Hosea xiii. 9. And, when God the SPIRIT hath convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, every child of God, made thoroughly acquainted, as *Paul* was, with the plague of his own heart, is conscious of carrying about with him a body of death; and, from the breakings forth of sin in the unrenewed part, is haunted daily with the spectre of his own creating, and in breathing the effluvia of his own corruption. And although, like *Paul*, he knows his deliverance to be compleat in CHRIST; yet while he remains in the present time-state of the Church, he groans under the burden of a body of sin, which will never cease under one form or other, manifesting forth its in-bred evil, until it drops into the dust. Reader! these are blessed discoveries, however humiliating. They do indeed damp the pride of the Pharisee, and contradict the doctrine of what some men teach, but no man ever found in his own heart inherent holiness. But they endear CHRIST. They preach daily the necessity of coming to him the last hour of the believer's life, as he came the first hour of his conversion. They prove, yea, practically prove, that salvation, from beginning to end, is all of grace. They give God all the glory, and cause the soul to lay low in the dust before God. So *Paul* was commissioned to teach the Church. And so *Paul* found. *To win CHRIST and be found in him.* Philip. iii. 3—14.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! the blessedness of the marriage state in CHRIST! If a woman is bound to her husband so long as he liveth, and the husband to his wife; JESUS my husband, my Maker, my Redeemer, ever liveth; and I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine. And, though I have played the harlot with many lovers, yet will I go and return to my first husband, for I am his in an everlasting covenant which cannot be broken.

Blessed and Eternal SPIRIT! I praise thee for the account which thou hast caused thy servant the Apostle to give of himself in this sweet Chapter. Here, through thy teaching, I behold *Paul* the spiritual condemning *Paul* the carnal, and groaning under a body of sin, which will not let him do the things the soul would do, because evil is present with him. And do I not behold in it, O LORD, my own features of character? Oh! for grace to enter into a right apprehension of the blessed teaching here presented and brought home to my poor heart. Surely, LORD! grace was in lively exercise in *Paul's* heart, when, from the conscious depths of sin in a body wholly of sin, the soul cried to the depths of divine mercy. And surely, the Apostle was enjoying sweet soul-union with JESUS, when under all, he found deliverance from sin and death, with all the consequences of evil in his own fallen nature, in the full redemption by CHRIST. Here, LORD, may my soul find deliverance also, while carrying about with me the present body my flesh, where dwelleth no good thing. Oh! for the unceasing and lively actings of grace and faith, to cry out with *Paul* under all these exercises; *I thank God through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle, having in the foregoing Chapters, fully established the Doctrine of Justification by Faith: here enters upon describing the Blessedness of it. He shews the Privileges of the Faithful, from the first Stage of Freedom from Condemnation, to the final Entrance into Glory.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

This is a most blessed Chapter, and cannot fail to make the soul of that man blessed, in whose heart God the HOLY GHOST bears witness, the gracious contents of it are written. It begins, with stating the happy condition of the believer in JESUS, that there is no condemnation to them that are in union with him: and it ends, in declaring that there can be no separation from him, in grace here and glory hereafter. It opens with shewing the blessedness of a oneness with CHRIST, which secures from all the condemning power of the law; and it prosecutes the sweet subject through all the paths of it, from such an union with CHRIST, and interest in CHRIST, as preserves the believer from all the remains of in-dwelling corruption, the sorrows of life, and all that may arise, both within and without, to afflict the child of God in going home to his father's house. And it closeth, with challenging all created power to keep from God in CHRIST!

Perhaps the Reader will enter into the better apprehension of the Chapter, if he were to divide it into the several parts, in which the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to direct the Apostle to treat the several subjects here brought forward. From the *first* to the end of the *fourth* verse, the blessedness of a freedom from the condemning power of sin is stated: and the believer justified in CHRIST, is shewn to be in union with CHRIST, and walking with CHRIST.

From the *fifth* to the *seventeenth* verse, the blessedness of the believer is shewn, in being led by the SPIRIT of God, manifesting thereby his Sonship. So that, as the remains of in-dwelling sin hinder not the in-dwelling of God the HOLY GHOST; neither shall it hinder the resurrection of the body at the last day, nor the everlasting happiness both of soul and body, to all eternity.

The *eighteenth* verse opens with shewing the unceasing comfort and support the child of God ought to derive, from the assurance of this state of things, under all the afflictions and sorrows of life. From this verse to the close of the *thirtieth*, the believer is taught how much a justified and sanctified life in CHRIST is, or ought to be, lifted up above the pressure of the necessary exercises of a life of grace, leading to a sure life of glory in CHRIST. And, very blessedly is it proved in this part of the Chapter, that as in all the appointments of the LORD, the Church of CHRIST in every individual of his mystical body, is chosen to be conformed to the image of CHRIST in all things, that he might be the first born among many brethren; so all things must, and can do no other, but *work together for good to them that love God, and are so called according to his purpose.*

Every thing being now said that can be refreshing and consolatory, to shew the believer his high privileges in CHRIST, where neither condemnation can affect, nor affliction cast down, his justified state in CHRIST before God: the Chapter closeth from the opening

of the *thirty-first verse* to the end, to challenge all created power to cause a separation between CHRIST and his people. And very blessed is that soul taught of GOD the SPIRIT, which, from the same cause as the Apostle enjoyed, can adopt the same triumphant language. Reader! let you and I, as we enter upon this precious Chapter, look up to GOD the HOLY GHOST for this unspeakable blessing, that we may make it our own through his divine teaching; and sweetly, through his grace enabling us, rejoice in the transporting assurance, that being justified freely *in CHRIST*, nothing can separate us from CHRIST, and from the love of GOD which is in CHRIST through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

I pray the Reader as he begins the Chapter, to remark with me, how blessedly the Apostle hath worded it. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS.* Strictly and properly speaking, there never was; for they were chosen in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, and chosen to be *holy and without blame before God in love.* Ephes. i. 4. But the sense is, that now, by the regenerating power of GOD the HOLY GHOST, they are brought forth to the knowledge and enjoyment of it, from the *Adam-state* of their fallen nature, and they *who were enemies to God by wicked works, are now reconciled in the body of CHRIST's flesh through death, to present them holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.* Colos. i. 21, 22. And I beg the Reader not to overlook the Apostle's words in the opening of this Chapter, on another account: He saith, that *there is now no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS.* Neither is there. For in him, as their glorious Head, Husband, and Surety; they are fully justified. But the Apostle doth not say, that there is nothing in them to *condemn.* For they know, and confess, that from the remains of in-dwelling sin in them, there is much to condemn; yea, they condemn themselves. I John i. 8, 9. But CHRIST hath taken away the condemning power of sin, in having answered all the demands of the law. And, the believer in CHRIST JESUS is in a state of compleat justification before GOD in CHRIST and his righteousness. GOD the FATHER justifies. Verse 33. GOD the SON justifieth. Rom. iv. 25. GOD the HOLY GHOST justifieth. I Tim. iii. 16.

And, I beg the Reader yet further to notice the Apostle's words, concerning those in whom there is no condemnation. They are said to walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT. *Paul* cannot be supposed to mean, that a child of GOD freed from condemnation, is freed from a body of flesh and sin; for he himself, in a few verses before in the preceding Chapter, lamented with a bitter cry under a body of sin, and a body of flesh of his own, in which he said dwelt no good thing. But I apprehend, the walk of life here spoken of as distinguished from flesh and guided by the spirit, means, a life of faith in CHRIST; living under an abiding sense of being wholly justified by Him, and having no confidence in the flesh. No Pharisical righteousness mingled in this walk. Not being puffed up with a fleshly mind. *Paul* elsewhere expresseth it: *To win CHRIST and be found in him.* I pray the Reader to turn to these scriptures. Philip. iii. 4—11. Coloss. ii. 18, 19. And doth not such views throw a light upon what follows. *The law of the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS* making the believer free from the law of sin and death: All holiness

only in CHRIST. CHRIST himself the law, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. All fulfilled by CHRIST. All made ours from CHRIST. So that this SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS, communicates the whole efficacy of it as from the head to its members, and they are *free from the law of sin and death*; and as one with CHRIST and in CHRIST, they are freely, fully, completely justified, and accepted as righteous in CHRIST before God.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

The Apostle, in order to shew the blessedness of being led by the HOLY GHOST, first begins to state the awfulness of a contrary condition, in being wholly under the influence of a carnal, unawakened, unregenerated mind. And what an alarming account he hath given of it? Reader! if the LORD hath brought you and me out of it, still let us look back, (and we may well look back with trembling,) and behold the precipice over which we both ran all the days of our unregeneracy, sinning with an high hand, ignorant of God, and ignorant of our own corruptions, before God. They are here said, *to mind the things of the flesh, to be in a state of enmity against God, to be in a total incapacity of pleasing God, and to be carnally minded, which is death.* All their pursuits are to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof! Their enmity against God is universal. They hate his holiness, his precepts, his perfections; his justice, his decrees, his sovereignty. They are at enmity with his providences, his dispensations, his appointments. They abominate his doctrines, his word, his gospel, and especially the choice of his Church in CHRIST. And living and dying in this state, the Apostle states the impossibility of salvation; for, saith he, *they that are in the flesh cannot please God!*

Reader! pause over the awful account, for it is awful, yea, tremendously awful. And, while you and I ponder well the solemn state of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God; is it possible for either of us to forget the long state of our unregeneracy, when we were in this very condition. Oh! how suited do I at this moment feel the words of the Apostle: *And such (saith he) were some of you! But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our God.* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

To this alarming account of an unrenewed state, the Apostle gives the outlines of the contrary, in a state of grace. *But ye, (saith he,) are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be the SPIRIT of God dwelleth in you.* By which we are not to apprehend, that a state of grace is wholly unconnected with that which is of a state of nature. Not so: For *Paul*, in the account he gives of himself, plainly shews, that he felt but too sensibly the workings of corrupt nature still in him. But, by the expression of *being not in the flesh but in the spirit*; the Apostle meant to say, that God's people were not, as in the days of their unregeneracy, wholly carnal, but were made sensible of their renewed state by the sweet influences of the SPIRIT, which marked them as children of God; and that the very opposition the remains of in-dwelling sin daily made to the life of God in the soul, became additional testimony to their adoption-character; in the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: so that they could not do the things which they would. Gal. v. 17.

The Apostle hath marked down a few of the love-tokens of God the HOLY GHOST in these verses, and very sweet they are in testimony of the regenerate state of the LORD's people, distinguished from the unrenewed; and as distinguished also from themselves, in what they

were before that the LORD called them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands asunder.

As, first. Though the child of GOD still groans under a body of sin and death, which he carries about with him, and will carry about with him as long as he continues in the present time-state of the Church; yet the HOLY GHOST daily gives him to see his adoption-character in renewing, comforting, refreshing grace and favor. The Person, work, glory, blood-shedding, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS is dear to him. He feels his heart at times directed unto the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST. All which testify, that he differs, not only from the unawakened and ungodly world; but from what he himself once was, in the days of his unregeneracy. He was once darkness, but now light in the LORD. And, although all his enjoyments in CHRIST falls far short of what his soul longs for; yet the sweet seasons (for very sweet they are) the LORD gives him, blessedly testify the change wrought by grace in the heart; and that *he who was once afar off, is brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST.*

Secondly. By the in-dwelling residence of the SPIRIT, the child of GOD is led to discover, that *the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.* These are blessed discoveries, when under divine teachings we arrive to the apprehension of them. For, when this knowledge is attained, the soul no longer looks to the body, and the deeds of the flesh in part for justification before GOD. It is dead because of sin. It is virtually all sin. The body is never renewed, until at the resurrection. And therefore to look to that which is dead, to bring forth any thing of life, cannot be the effect of divine teaching. The child of GOD no longer expects fruit of righteousness from that stock. It is his consolation, under all that he daily feels, and with which he groans, in the workings of sin in the flesh, that the old man, though not dead, is yet crucified; and though not wholly destroyed, is dying daily. Sin shall not have dominion, though it too often appears. It shall not condemn, though it accuseth. JESUS hath taken away the guilt, and destroyed the power by his blood. And, in the mean time, though the body be thus dead because of sin; the spirit is life because of righteousness. Though, saith Paul, *our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Thirdly. Amidst all the workings of this sinful body, which distress and afflict the soul, by their daily opposition to a life of grace; it is the blessedness and privilege of the child of GOD, when renewed by the SPIRIT, that they are no longer *debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh.* CHRIST hath freed them from all the debts of sin. And GOD the HOLY GHOST preserves them by his sanctifying grace from the baleful influences of it. By the LORD the SPIRIT, they are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body. Not in their own strength, for they have none. Neither by their own exertions, for all would be found weakness in the day of temptation. But, it is GOD the HOLY GHOST which by his grace bears up the child of GOD, and carries him through all the paths of trial. Without him, the heart would be wholly laid open to the incursions of sin and Satan, as the ungodly, and unregenerate are. But with them who are under the influences of

grace, when at any time *the enemy cometh in like a flood, the SPIRIT of the LORD lifteth up a standard against him.* Isaiah lix. 19.

And *fourthly*, to mention no more. The leadings of the SPIRIT, and the witnessings of the SPIRIT, all manifest in their daily tokens of grace, the sonship and privileges of the regenerate in CHRIST. It is they, and they only, which have freeness of access to the throne, and to the pardon-office of CHRIST; and can, and do say, *Abba, Father!* No servants, no bonds-men, no unregenerate; none but of the family of GOD in CHRIST, who are heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST; can so approach, or claim such a relationship. An union with CHRIST is the only foundation for enjoying communion with the heirship of CHRIST. *It is because ye are sons,* (saith the Apostle elsewhere,) *GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Gal. iv. 6.

Reader! pause, and contemplate the blessedness of such a state! By virtue of their adoption-character, they are brought into the present enjoyment by faith, of their vast inheritance; and have a full right in CHRIST to the sanctified use of all temporal blessings, the privilege of all spiritual blessings, and ere long to the compleat enjoyment of all eternal blessings; for they are *heirs of GOD and joint-heirs with CHRIST.* And I beg the Reader to observe with me, how the Apostle hath drawn the line of distinction in these grand concerns between the LORD's people, and the ungodly world: the regenerate, and the carnal! Yea, let the Reader not fail to notice, the difference between what the child of GOD once was in the darkness of his mind, when in a state of unawakened nature: and what he now is when called by sovereign grace. And I request him also, not to overlook what the Apostle hath said, from his own experience, in relation to the body of death still with the believer. It is a grand point never to be lost sight of by the child of GOD, that the carnal mind is still enmity against GOD; for *it is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can be.* All that is carnal in the child of GOD, is still of the same carnal nature as ever, and will remain so until it drops into the grave, and is changed at the resurrection. Philip. iii. 21. *David*, ages before *Paul*, taught the same truth, being taught it himself of GOD; and confessed it to the LORD, and to the Church. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no fear of GOD before his eyes.* Psm. xxxvi. 1. *David* did not read this solemn truth in another man's heart, but in his own: yea, from his heart it spake it, and without reserve. Reader! have you a heart-felt acquaintance with these things? Do you know, that a child of GOD, though when regenerate *in his spirit*, he is made a partaker of the divine nature; 2 Pet. i. 4. and consequently in this renewed part, can never be holier even in heaven, than he is upon earth, being holy in CHRIST, and of the mystical body of CHRIST: yet, *in his flesh*, he is still the same body of sin unrenewed? Doth the Reader know these things? It will be to his comfort, to get more and more acquainted with them, that through grace, he may learn to walk more and more humbly with GOD. Depend upon it, nothing will tend to endear to CHRIST with equal affection to the heart, as when made sensible, from the workings of the body of sin in our nature we daily need him. Nothing will tend more effectually to hide pride

from our eyes as when convinced, that *in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing*. And, nothing will tend under God the SPIRIT to keep open a constant source of true godly sorrow and repentance, equal to the conviction, that *the body is dead because of sin*, though *the spirit is life because of righteousness in CHRIST*. Reader! do not dismiss the subject before that you have consulted the following Scriptures. Gen. vi. 5. Job xlii. 5, 6. Isaian vi. 5. Dan. x. 8. Rom. vii. 14 to the end. Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope.

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for.

25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

28 And we know that all things work together

for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Under this part of the Chapter, we have a vast fulness of subject, which, if prosecuted through all its different bearings, would of itself form a volume. I must study shortness for the *Poor Man's Commentary*, while omitting nothing that is important to dwell upon.

The Apostle begins this passage with stating his views of the disproportioned estimate, between the sufferings of the present life to the Church and to all the members of it, how great or numerous soever they might be, and the glory which is to follow. And this is so plain and obvious as to require no enlargement. For, as the present time-state of the Church, compared to eternity is no more than a grain of sand to the earth: So, the sorrows of such a state can bear no greater proportion than a drop of rain to the ocean. There is a vast beauty in the expression, *the glory which shall be revealed in us*: meaning CHRIST. THE SON of GOD in our nature glorified in his saints. In him, and through him, the in-dwelling of GOD in his threefold character of Persons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, will be the glory revealed. Our utmost conceptions can go but a very little way in this subject. The LORD JESUS hath graciously opened to us the blessed contemplation, in what he said to his FATHER. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.* John xvii. 22. And what a glory the LORD hath indeed already given his regenerate? What a glory is it to contemplate the union of CHRIST and his Church, from one eternity to another! Reader! have you ever studied the glory of the Church, what it was before all worlds *in* CHRIST? What it was during the time-state of JESUS appearing on earth in the Church's union *with* CHRIST? What it is now in heaven, in being represented there by CHRIST? And what heart shall conceive, what it will be, *in the glory*, as *Paul* here speaks, which shall be revealed in us *from* CHRIST; in his dwelling in his Church, and his Church in him to all eternity! *I in them* (said the LORD) *and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* John xvii. 23.

Concerning the creature here spoken of, waiting for the *manifestation of the sons of God*, being made *subject to vanity*, under the *bondage of corruption*, and *groaning and travailling together in pain until now*; various have been the opinions of various persons, but all entangled with difficulty in the apprehension. Some have referred it

to angels, some to the brute creation, some to the world of intelligent creatures partaking in the common event of the fall. But the HOLY GHOST hath not been pleased to throw a light upon it sufficient to determine with any certainty. But it is a sweet consolation, be it what it may, the promise that follows, that this creature shall ultimately be delivered, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. So the HOLY GHOST hath said by the Apostle in another scripture. All things shall be finally gathered in CHRIST. Ephes. i. 10.

But I pass by many other considerations, to call the Reader's attention to what is said in those verses, concerning the love, and grace, and mercy of GOD the HOLY GHOST. The Apostle saith, that the SPIRIT helpeth our infirmities, for we are ignorant how to pray; but He maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: and that He who searcheth the hearts, knoweth the mind of the SPIRIT, and maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of GOD. Here is a vast depth of Scripture here, as it relates to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, of the HOLY GHOST. But I must not indulge myself in entering into the whole particularly. A few observations only shall I offer.

And *first*. Here are the infirmities of God's children considered, which rendereth the help of the HOLY GHOST so truly blessed. They know not the extent of their own fallen nature. They are ignorant of the power of Satan. When they would pray, they are too often faint, and unable. And, though a throne of grace is open before them; yet they want words, and they want faith to come as they ought, to the mercy-seat, to seek mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Secondly. Here is the HOLY GHOST very blessedly set forth in his sweet office-character, namely, the helper of our infirmities in prayer. Thus the LORD the SPIRIT was promised. Zech. xii. 10. And thus he is found to his people. John xv. 26, 27.

But *thirdly*. It is very blessed to have a right apprehension how GOD the HOLY GHOST helpeth the LORD's people in prayer; that when they are ignorant what to pray for, how to plead, and with what words to come before the LORD; GOD the SPIRIT puts the cry into their heart, and a spirit of wrestling in their souls, that they may plead like wrestling *Jacob*, and come off like prevailing *Israel*. This scripture shews. When we know not what we should pray for as we ought, (which we never can know but by his teaching,) the SPIRIT maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Not that the HOLY GHOST groans, but he gives a fervency of prayer in the souls of his people, which can only express itself in groans, not in words. Not that the HOLY GHOST makes intercession *for them*, (for this is the sole office of JESUS the High Priest,) but *with them*. The SPIRIT pleads with them, and not with GOD. He indites their prayers. He teacheth how to pray, and what to pray for. And what He teacheth them to ask upon earth, is in exact correspondence to what JESUS their Great High Priest is interceding for them in Heaven. The prayer taught by GOD the HOLY GHOST in their hearts, is like an echo to the intercession of JESUS before the throne. And this receiveth another blessed testimony, because it is

not only in perfect unison to the intercession of CHRIST and the inditing of the HOLY SPIRIT; but it is in exact uniformity to the will of GOD. He who searcheth the heart of the poor petitioner, knoweth the mind and will of GOD. So that all is harmonious, the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in the precious work and grace; and all concur in those blessed purposes of salvation.

In the verse which speaks of the highly privileged lovers of GOD, who are the called according to GOD's purpose; we can only stay to notice, that it comprehends all the blessings of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. *All things work together for good.* GOD himself in his threefold character of Persons, and in all his Covenant offices, and relations: the FATHER in his everlasting love and purpose: the SON in his fullness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency: and the HOLY GHOST in his operations, graces, and influences: all minister to this end, in every department of nature, providence, grace, and glory. And, the *call* implies the freedom of it, the fullness of it, the unmerited, unexpected, unlooked for, mercifulness of it: and all referred into the divine purpose, not human deservings; not man's merit, but GOD's mercy.

Neither doth the cause of those distinguishing blessings which is related in the verses which follow, strike the mind with less conviction of GOD's sovereignty and favor; namely, JEHOVAH's foreknowledge, fore-appointment, and eternal design of the Church to those mercies; that the glorious Head, and his highly favored members, might have a conformity. Every thing is here shewn to have been arranged and ordained in one continued train of order, that all should be *to* CHRIST, and *from* CHRIST, and *for* CHRIST; and all leading from the original and eternal design, through all the gradations of being predestinated to the being called, and from being called to the being justified, and from the being justified to the being glorified. Reader! ponder well these precious things, and call to mind the Apostle's advice. 2 Peter i. 10, 11.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son; but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Apostle, in summing up the several contents of this very blessed Chapter, seems to be at a loss while contemplating the vast subjects contained in it; and, unable to express his wonder at the divine love, and the distinguishing mercy shewn the Church, cries out: *What shall we then say to these things?* On the part of God, he hath given every thing that is blessed. Yea, such astonishing love he hath shewn as passeth all understanding: he hath given us his own SON. He hath justified, CHRIST hath died, the HOLY SPIRIT hath witnessed. And therefore, *Paul* challengeth the whole creation to separate from CHRIST. And he goeth on to enumerate every thing which might seem in the first view to militate against the present and everlasting safety of the Church, and bids defiance to the whole to keep from CHRIST. Reader! think, if you are able, the everlasting safety of the Church; and look up to God under the impression of the immense mercy, with suited thanksgiving and praise. Oh! for an heart to believe the record which God hath given of his dear SON; and in every exercise, and trial of life, to keep in remembrance those sweet words of encouragement to bear up under all, which like an inscription speaks to the child of God as from the cross: *He that spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! can you, can I, find strength of faith, under the assurance of being justified in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, to rest in him for everlasting life; then may we take part in the precious truth of the Apostle's words, for there is no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And, blessed be God for all the high privileges of a justified state before God. Led by the SPIRIT of God, we are the sons of God. And CHRIST being in us, though the body be dead because of sin, yet is the spirit life because of righteousness. No spirit of bondage any more to fear. No debtors to the law any more to dread. But, living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT, we through the SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, and we shall live.

Grant, Almighty LORD and FATHER, grace to call thee *abba*, Father! LORD! by the SPIRIT of adoption we have received, give us to be conformed to the image of thy dear SON. And being called, and justified, and made heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST, we may at length be glorified in CHRIST for ever. And nothing, in life or death, in time, or in eternity, *shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.*

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle having now fully established the Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, and shewn the blessed Effects of it in the Heart and Conscience; here enters upon the Doctrine of God's original and eternal Purpose in Election. He treats of the Case of Israel in Abraham's Seed; and towards the close of the Chapter, shews the same Doctrine, in the Call of the Gentiles.

I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh :

4 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises ;

5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Perhaps no passage in the word of God is more difficult to apprehend, than the one at the opening of this Chapter. Here is the Apostle, in his regenerate state, entering with such warmth and earnestness of soul, into the spiritual and eternal concerns of Israel after the flesh, that he professes a wish to be accursed from CHRIST for the accomplishment of their salvation. And, he appeals to CHRIST for the truth of it. Yea, GOD the HOLY GHOST bears him witness he saith in his own conscience, that it is so. That *Paul* might feel, as he saith he did, great sorrow of heart in the view of his brethren after the flesh being shut out of CHRIST's kingdom, is very probable. Natural feelings are very strong feelings. But here *Paul* is speaking as under the most fervent gracious impressions. And yet both nature

and grace seem to be in direct opposition to what *Paul* here wished. For it is contrary to the first law of nature, to wish a man's own damnation. And, it is contrary to all the finer feelings of grace, to contemplate, much less wish, being for ever separated from CHRIST upon any consideration whatever. It is a most difficult passage to apprehend. We meet with an instance in the first view somewhat similar, when *Moses*, the man of God, prayed so fervently for Israel, that he begged his name might rather be blotted out of the book of GOD than Israel. Exod. xxxii. 32. But the book here alluded to, most probably meant the book of *temporal* life, and not the *eternal*. *Paul's* is a much higher note: *Accursed from CHRIST*. Indeed none but one, even the God-Man CHRIST JESUS, could bear the curse, and be made a curse for his redeemed. It was his peculiar honor and glory. Gal. iii. 13. I must leave the passage as I found it, for I am free to confess it is attended with too much difficulty of apprehension for me to explore. One improvement may be drawn from it; when we behold such an ardent zeal for the welfare of immortal souls in the Apostle, to take shame in the recollection, how cold and lifeless all of the present hour are, who minister in holy things, in the ministry of the word and ordinances. Oh! for a fervency of spirit, both in ministers and Churches! LORD the HOLY GHOST! pour out of thy blessed influences, and cause a revival in this our day and generation!

Let it be observed, concerning those of whom the Apostle speaks, that the privileges they are here said to have enjoyed, were not spiritual. They were *Israelites*, because descended from *Jacob* by natural descent, which made them so far honorable in that alliance. But they were not of the spiritual seed, concerning whom it was said, *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*. Gen. xxi. 12. Neither is the *adoption* here spoken of, that adoption which is of grace, but nature. GOD separated this one family, with whom might be deposited the shadows and types of the covenant in CHRIST. But all these were designed no further, than to minister to that *better covenant established upon better promises*. Heb. viii. 6. *Paul* felt, however, a very high regard for Israel after the flesh, in that they were not only his brethren, as a nation, but also as the LORD had so distinguished them with such unspeakable blessings, in their peculiar national character, with his ordinances, and above all, in that high honor that CHRIST after the flesh should come, *who is over all, God, blessed for ever. Amen!*

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac;

11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

The Apostle seems to have found his soul relieved at the opening of this verse, in calling to remembrance that the true Israel of God, notwithstanding the Israel after the flesh were shut out, had all the blessings of the covenant in CHRIST designed them. The people, the true Israel of God, whom JEHOVAH formed for himself, were still, and everlastingly must be, his chosen generation, his peculiar people, a royal priesthood. God called them a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation, Exod. xix. 6. And *Paul* here makes the distinction between nature and grace, between Israel after the flesh, and after the spirit. He runs up the subject to the fountain head of the appointment, and in the everlasting purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure of JEHOVAH, shews how the Church was chosen in CHRIST from the beginning; nothing in the children of promise, who were the happy partakers of it, predisposing to the mercy, or in the smallest degree contributing to it, because the thing was done before they were born. *Paul* most plainly and decidedly shews this, and confirms it by quotations from the Old Testament scripture. If the Reader will consult the scriptures referred to, and compare them with one another, the subject *Paul* had in view to establish will appear in its obvious sense and meaning. Gen. xxv. 21—27. Malachi i. 3. Gal. iv. 28, to the end.

14 What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I

might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

The Apostle here enters upon the justification of the doctrine he is establishing the proofs of in this chapter. He shews upon principles of common sense and right reason only, that the doctrine of Election is as clearly proved as any one circumstance in the ordinary transactions of life. And he manifests the justice and equity of God in the appointment. And that he might carry every force of argument with him, he opens the subject in his usual way of a question. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!* There can be none in God's choosing or rejecting, when neither that choice or rejection is induced by any thing out of himself. The children, when chosen or rejected, not being born, and consequently not having done either good or evil, can have had no hand in the business, but the whole is referred into the sovereign will of God. Hence, therefore, the children chosen cannot complain, for to them the sovereign will of God is an act of favor wholly undeserved. And the children rejected cannot charge God with injustice, since they have no claim to any favor, or right, which on terms of strict justice they could demand. Thus the matter stands. And here it must stand, and will stand, to all eternity, in opposition to all the querulous arguments and ungodly reasoning of men.

I do not mean to follow the subject any further than what the Apostle hath done. God's own declaration, which Paul quotes, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;* is with me final, unanswerable, and satisfactory. And the instance of *Pharaoh* most express in point. But I would beg the Reader to remark with me one circumstance, which I confess in my view is particularly striking. It hath through grace satisfied my mind for many long years concerning the sovereignty of God.

Among the carnal world, there is nothing that excites the bitter hatred of the human heart equal to the exercise of God's sovereignty, on the doctrine of election and reprobation. Every son and daughter of *Adam*, while in the unregenerate state of an unregenerate mind, riseth up in rebellion against it. And yet, wonderful to relate, there is not one of the whole race, either son or daughter, but what, in the proceedings of their own life from day to day, absolutely preach and practise the doctrine both of election and reprobation in all they do or say. From the wayward capricious temper of the little child, to the petulancy and ill-humour of the man of grey hairs, they manifest this in their pursuits and desires, in the objects of their approbation or dislike, their predilection or hatred, almost every hour. They have their choice and aversions, as it respects their company, their food, their dress, their pleasures, their conversations. If at their daily table there is a variety of dishes, to pamper the appetites of the luxurious, (as through the bounty of a bountiful God too often such persons in a shameful profusion abuse that bounty to the gratification of their unbounded lusts,) they will choose here or there, reject, or

dislike, as their fancy directs them. And this without either rule or reason, either wisdom or good sense, nay, sometimes to their sorrow, in inducing sickness, and a thousand evils, and death. And should any venture to call them in question, either in their judgment or conduct, what anger sometimes hath followed? Is this preaching and practising election and reprobation, or is it not? And preaching and practising both with an high hand of sin and folly, and not unfrequently in numberless instances of injustice, dishonesty, and fraud! But, when the Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, declares, that he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, the proud unhumbled heart of man riseth in boilings of the most deadly anger, and complains of the righteous decree. So then there is but One Being in the Universe capable of acting with a sovereignty of power and wisdom, whose election and reprobation must be founded on an unerring standard of what is right; and He, according to fallen man's judgment, shall be the only one precluded from the exercise of this privilege! Such is the blindness and desperately wicked state of the heart of man by the fall!

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour.

22 *What* if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people*; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved :

28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone ;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The doctrine is here supposed to be taken as granted. GOD'S sovereignty shall no longer be disputed, saith the daring sinner. Be it so, if it must be so. *But why doth he yet find fault?* Here's impudence to the full. Here's practical contempt of God, worse, if possible, than even denying his very Being! But in what a beautiful way and manner hath the Apostle taken the question, and answered it. How conclusive and satisfactory is the similitude of the Potter and the clay, in relation to forming vessels of what shape, figure, form, or usefulness he pleaseth. And who ever ventured to call in question the Potter's power, or the Potter's wisdom, when exercising his pleasure, in making one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor? There is however this difference (and to which the figure could not reach,) between the Almighty Potter in his ordinations, and the earthy Potter in his. The vessel and the clay are both the LORD'S own, for the earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; all are his by creation, first forming the clay, and then man out of it. So that had God, when he made man from the earth, made any other creature instead of man, there would have been no injustice done! for the earth, and the man made out of the earth, were both equally the LORD'S. But this could not be the case with the earthy potter. The clay he made his vessels from was already made to his hands,

and not his. And his formings could be no other than clay, however one vessel might be designed for honor, and another for dishonor. Isa. lxiv. 8. Jer. xviii. 1—6. 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

Reader! I detain you over these verses, and over this doctrine altogether, only to make one or two observations from the whole. And, *first*, I beg you to remember that God's sovereignty stands just where it did from everlasting, after all that hath been said of it, or written against it. God is not accountable to his creatures for his conduct. It is enough to know that God cannot do wrong. He is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*. His sovereignty is one of his distinguishing attributes. And that sovereignty is founded in perfect rectitude. Let the pride and arrogancy of men or devils cavil at it, the answer is the same, *My counsel* (saith JEHOVAH) *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*. Isa. xlvi. 10.

Secondly, It is one among the many precious signs of grace in the heart, when the mind and affections are brought over to the conviction, not only that God's sovereignty distinguisheth his Almighty character, but that all the Lord appoints is right. A child of God, when seeing any thing which appears to him mysterious in the divine administration, concludes, that it is his defect, and not the Lord's, which renders it so. *I was dumb*, (said one of old, under some sharp exercise,) *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*. Psm. xxxix. 9. All must be right, and all cannot but be finally well, for it is the Lord's doing. This is a blessed frame of mind, when we not only bend to the Lord's appointment, but bend with holy faith and satisfaction. I cannot discover God's path, but I am sure that God's ways are right. His sovereignty is my security.

Thirdly, When we behold the great mass of men rejecting the sovereignty of God with the scriptures of God in their hand, and having all the advantages of the ordinances of the Gospel, we awfully discover how far our nature must be sunk in rejecting the counsel of God against their own souls. The very truths of God, when brought before such a character, only serve to discover yet more and more his natural enmity to God, and the aversion he hath to God's gracious decrees by CHRIST. On the other hand, where the heart is brought to the unceasing acknowledgment of the divine sovereignty, there a conviction accompanies it of being taught of God. *Paul* had no sooner God's SON revealed in him, than *immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood*. Gal. i. 15, 16. And *Paul* here gives his unqualified belief to the purpose of God according to election, verse 11.

I must not dismiss this subject, before that I have first called the attention of the Reader to that sweet and precious conclusion *Paul* makes, from the doctrine of election, in the inducing holiness of life and godliness. The Apostle, speaking of the properties of distinguishing grace, saith, that *except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah*. The Prophet, before the Apostle, had many ages before declared, that *the remnant of Jacob*, that is, the seed of CHRIST, *should be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass*. Micah v. 7. And thus the Church of CHRIST is in every age distinguished. For while the earth, in the unawakened

nature of *Adam*, is like the dry barren heath of the desert, which knoweth not when good cometh, the droppings of grace upon the heritage of God makes it flourish and blossom as the rose. And it is the Church which preserves the world from instantly perishing. If all the LORD's family were gathered out, as *Lot* and his household were, from the cities of the plain, destruction would soon follow. Gen. xix. 23, 24. So that the doctrine of election is the very doctrine of godliness. The LORD preserveth the world for the Church's sake. And the holiness of the Church in CHRIST, is the sole cause wherefore the world standeth. The same day in which *Noah* entered into the ark, the flood came and destroyed the world by water. Gen. vii. 16, 17. The same hour in which *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, the LORD rained down fire from heaven and destroyed them all. Gen. xix. 22. Oh! how sure is it, that the earth oweth its present continuance to the lives of the faithful in the land. And how very sure also, that the doctrine of election is a doctrine according to godliness. *As he who hath called his people is holy, so are they holy in all conversation and godliness.* Reader! may the LORD give a gracious apprehension of these things, that we may both *give diligence to make our calling and election sure.* For, (saith the Apostle,) *if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.* For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. 2 Peter i. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

How sure, how certain, and how unalterably fixed, are the ways and purposes of JEHOVAH. From eternity the whole is *ordered in all things, and sure*; and through the whole time-state of the Church, God's purposes have been, and must be, fulfilled. As in the eternity of the LORD's nature, so in his ordinations there can be nothing liable to change. His sovereignty is the rule of all his actions, and his will and pleasure the invariable standard of good.

Sweetly, in relation to his Church, all is planned in wisdom; and nothing can arise to alter his ways towards his people. Electing love gave birth to the Church in CHRIST. And in the instance of *Jacob* and *Esau* it hath been shewn, that not only before the children had done any act of good or evil, but, that the purpose of election might stand, it was said, that the elder should serve the younger; so that electing grace preserved what electing love had began. Reader! it is very blessed when the proud sails of human confidence give way to the sovereign decrees of God; and we hail God's appointments as the result of God's favor to his Church in CHRIST. *Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

C H A P. X.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is here expressing his deep Concern that the Jews were turning from CHRIST to the Law. He speaks very blessedly towards the Close of the Chapter, that no Believer, whether Jew or Gentile, looking to CHRIST, shall fail of Grace and Salvation in CHRIST.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This chapter, like the former, gives us a very interesting view of the tenderness and affection of *Paul's* heart. He knew what the Lord had said, that there was a remnant according to the election of grace; and, therefore, unconscious who they were, in the great mass of the Jewish nation, he testifieth to the whole body of his brethren after the flesh, how eagerly he longed for their salvation by CHRIST. For the whole Jewish nation differed widely from the world around them in their apprehension of God. They had a zeal for his glory distinguished from all their neighbours. They were not as those nations were, Idolaters. They expected CHRIST. They honored the law in the external observance of it. But in the midst of all this, they had no consciousness of CHRIST, and were totally ignorant of Him as a SAVIOR. A righteousness of their own, or a fancied righteousness they were endeavoring to set up, all the mean time unconscious of the Person, and work of the LORD our righteousness.

Reader! it may be well to pause, and consider the subject as it concerns ourselves. An ignorance of CHRIST's righteousness, and a supposed preparation for acceptance with GOD in a righteousness of our own, is the general creed of the present hour. The great mass of those who profess the Gospel, if engaged at all in a concern for salvation, is prosecuting the hope of acceptance, partly by the deeds of the law, and partly by the grace of CHRIST. But, this is neither law nor Gospel. It is not the law, for *a curse is pronounced upon every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Gal. iii. 10. Neither is it the Gospel, for there we are expressly said to be *saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God, and not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

I would not wish the Reader to turn away from the subject those few verses contain, before that he hath considered, and that very maturely, the charge *Paul* brings against those brethren of his, of whom he speaks. There is nothing as essential in forming the standard of true faith, as this very point of the sinner's justification before God. If we are confused in our apprehension of things here, that confusion will run, like the links in a chain, through every part in life and practice. Now the Apostle expressly saith, that *CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Here then is the righteousness, the sole righteousness of his people. In this the soul of the true believer is justified before God. And, such is the infinite worth and perfection of it, that God beholds and accepts the persons of the redeemed in it, as fully and compleatly justified, as if they had wrought it out themselves. For *CHRIST* and his redeemed are one. The scripture blessedly saith concerning it, that it is *unto all and upon all them that believe*. Rom. iii. 22. See the Commentary on this passage.

And I beg the Reader yet one moment longer to bear with me while I add, that beside the proper apprehension of the doctrine itself, in order to a real enjoyment of the soul, there must be an heart-felt acquaintance with it in the conscience. The Apostle *James* calls that word an *engrafted word* which is able to save the soul: James i. 21. meaning, that it lives in the heart, and is always remaining there. Not floating in the understanding, but influencing the whole life. A child of God, when regenerated by the *HOLY GHOST*, awakened to a sense of sin, and an apprehension of the Person, work, and glory of *CHRIST*; hath passed from death to life. He hath felt the sentence of God's broken law in his conscience; and hath fled from it to *JESUS*, and his compleat, all-justifying righteousness. And here he rests. In this he finds a perfect security. And his comfort in it is not made up in the correctness of his judgment, but in the lively actings of faith in his soul. Reader! are your apprehensions of *CHRIST*, as the end of the law for righteousness, living principles, inwrought by God the *SPIRIT* on this foundation?

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach:

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this short, but blessed description, of the difference between the law righteousness, and the Gospel righteousness, as they concern the Church of God. Both are alike called God's righteousness, because both are from God. But the one was never given in a way of justification before God, for by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in his sight. And it was intended only to minister to the other, in whom alone, as holding forth the Person and work of CHRIST, all the seed of Israel were to be justified. Isaiah xlv. 25.

I do not think it necessary to dwell in this place on the subject, having so largely considered it in the *third* and *fourth* Chapters of this same Epistle. I would refer the Reader to those scriptures. And, added to what is there said, I would just remark, that the expressions here made use of by the Apostle, of *confession with the mouth*, and *belief in the heart*, very decidedly shew, that Paul considered those principles as living principles, not floating merely in the understanding, but influencing the mind and conscience. Head knowledge, void of heart influence, is the bane of the present day. Thousands, it is to be feared, are resting in a name to believe, while virtually dead before God. Paul saith, *it is with the heart* (not the head) man believeth unto righteousness. And elsewhere he prayed for the Church, that CHRIST *might dwell in their hearts by faith*. Ephes iii. 17. There are two or three grand points of distinction, which mark grace in the heart from knowledge merely in the head; which the Reader would do well to attend to. *First*. In every soul truly regenerated, there is an heart-felt acquaintance with the Person, and work, and glory of CHRIST. JESUS himself explains it, in calling it, *seeing the SON, and believing on him*: John vi. 40. that is, such a sight by faith, as can, and doth depend upon him for life and salvation. GOD the HOLY GHOST, who convinceth of sin, convinceth also of JESUS, and his all-sufficient righteousness; and inclines the heart to believe, as Paul here expresseth it, *unto righteousness*. *Secondly*. In every child of God, thus taught of God to know CHRIST, who he

is, and to believe in him for salvation; there will be also, an heart-felt enjoyment of him, and his finished work, as the only desired means of salvation. This remedy for the recovery from the *Adam-nature* of sin, is beheld and accepted with holy joy and thanksgiving, as God's own providing, and made use of accordingly. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* The affections are all in it. The soul is won to CHRIST, and the soul wins CHRIST, and desires to be found in him. Hence that sweet promise of JESUS is enjoyed, and the soul made happy in *durable riches, and righteousness.* Prov. viii. 17—21. And *thirdly*, to add no more. In every soul truly regenerated, there will be a daily coming to CHRIST, an entire leaning upon CHRIST, a full cleaving to CHRIST, as the Church of old is described, *coming up out of the wilderness.* Song viii. 5. Ephes. i. 13. Psm. lxxxix. 16. John xv. 5. Reader! what saith your experience to those statements? These are heart-feelings, soul-enjoyments, which differ as widely from head knowledge unaccompanied by grace, as the sight of food, doth from partaking of it. Oh! the blessedness of knowing and enjoying CHRIST! *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel, For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The Apostle having shewn, that the children of God, whether Jew or Gentile, or wherever scattered, should find grace; and having quoted a well known passage to confirm it of the Prophet Joel, which Peter had also explained, in reference to *the remnant whom the Lord shall call*: (see Joel ii. 32. with Acts ii. 16—21.) here takes up the subject to shew no less the necessity of a divine mission, in every instance where the Lord would bless his word to the souls of the people. And, he makes references to other scriptures in proof. Isaiah lii. 7. and liii. 1. But, the Apostle hath expressed himself so clearly on those points, as to render unnecessary any Comment. I would rather, therefore, as a short improvement from the whole, request the Reader's attention to what the Apostle hath said on the subject of *faith coming by hearing*; that we may both enter into the Apostle's meaning, and, if it please the Lord, gather instruction under his Almighty teaching, on this interesting point of *faith and hearing by the word of God*.

There is somewhat very blessed in hearing the word of God, when God gives the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. David, under the influence of it cried out: *I will never forget thy word, for by it thou hast quickened me.* Psm. cxix. 93. And every child of God can say the same who hath felt the Lord's power, in the Lord's word, and like Job, hath esteemed it more than his necessary food. Job xxiii. 12. See Jerem. xv. 16.

But while the people of God, when brought by regeneration into an heart-felt knowledge and enjoyment of the word of God, feel the blessedness and the sweetness of it to their soul's joy; it becomes the subject of interesting enquiry, how *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*? We all know that faith is the gift of God. No man can create faith in his own heart, neither can he increase what the great Author and Giver of faith hath planted there. Let this be marked down as a principle perfectly incontrovertible. Faith is God's gift, not man's work. It is of God's grace, not man's merit. *Unto you, saith the Apostle, it is given to believe on him.* Philip. i. 29.

When this point is clearly and fully established in the mind, we shall the better enter into the right apprehension of what the Apostle saith: *faith cometh by hearing*. The Lord hath graciously appointed means and instruments for the promoting his glory, in his people's happiness; for the conveying to them many of his gifts and blessings. Now, faith by hearing is one of them. A child of God comes to the word of God. He hears in it of JESUS. His heart is warmed, and his affections excited thereby. And he finds his mind going forth and desires after CHRIST, and in a confidence, and love, and faith in CHRIST. Hence faith, in all those instances, may be said to come by hearing. And thus the Lord stamps a blessing on Gospel ordinances, and the hearing of his blessed word. The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Church of the *Thessalonians*, laid this down as a proof of their election, because the word was blessed to them in this way.

Knowing, brethren beloved, (said he,) your election of GOD. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance. I Thess. i. 4, 5.

And, if my Reader be of them who by regeneration know the LORD, he must have the same testimony in his heart also. Remember, my brother, that this faith which cometh by hearing, doth not come in such an open display as many of the public manifestations of the LORD in his providence, or his grace, may. The LORD speaks in the still, small voice, as powerfully to his people's joy, as when in the thunder or the storm. His love and favor are equally manifested. Have you never felt, when hearing the word of GOD, an enlightening, refreshing, comforting, instructing, soul-strengthening communication from it? Could you not many times have said, as the disciples did, whose souls were refreshed with the divine discourse of JESUS himself, when talking with them in their way to *Emmaus*: *did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?* Luke xxiv. 32. Surely it is the same LORD, who now speaketh, by the ministry of the same word, in the present day of the Church, when at any time bringing them *under his shadow and making his fruit sweet to their taste.* Song ii. 3.

And, what tends to endear this act of grace still more, (for it is wholly grace,) is the blessedness of it, in that it depends not upon our preparedness to receive it, or our deservedness of it, in endeavoring to prepare for it, but the LORD's favor; for it comes *like the rain or the dew of heaven, which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men.* Micah v. 7. If the LORD was to suspend this, or any other blessing, till man made himself prepared for it; then would it never come at all. Precious JESUS! how suited are thy words here, as in a thousand other instances: *I am found of them that sought me not! I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name!* Isaiah lxxv. 1.

My Brother! let you and I delight to attend ordinances and the hearing of the LORD's word; and not in any preparation of our own, but the LORD's. For my own part, I would pray to seek the LORD's face in the LORD's strength. Faith will never come by my attempting to create it in my own heart. Neither will I despond of receiving faith because of this. I am here blessedly taught, that *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD.* Hence, I am not to consider what I can do; for I can do nothing but sin. But my business is, to consider what CHRIST, the great Author and Finisher of faith, can do; yea, what he will do, for his people. *I am come, he saith, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* John x. 10.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a beautiful example the great Apostle of the Gentiles holds forth to all that minister in the Gospel of CHRIST, in his earnest desire and prayer to GOD, for Israel's salvation! With what rapture he speaks of his LORD, and the fulness of redemption in him. Paul well knew in his own experience, and therefore most affectionately longed for the apprehension of it in others, that *CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

It will be a very blessed use of this scripture, if from the statement the Apostle hath given the Church in this Chapter, the minds of the people are taught, under God, the vast difference between head-knowledge, and heart-enjoyment. Oh! for grace to rightly know, and as rightly to enjoy, the blessedness of the Apostle's words, that it is *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation!*

Blessed Author and Giver of all faith! Thou that art the glorious object of faith, and in whom faith centers all her hopes, joys, and expectations! Do thou, LORD, increase our faith in thee, and our dependence upon thee! And cause the several means of grace in thine house of prayer, to be blessed of our God! Oh! for faith, in the largest, fullest, and most extensive enjoyments of it, to be in the daily actings of my soul, that through God the HOLY GHOST I may be kept alive in the hearing of thy word, and by faith be enabled to keep up and maintain unceasing communion with my God and SAVIOR, in the enjoyment of it. Precious JESUS! do thou make me new and fresh discoveries of thyself, in greater frequency, and to greater extent. Let thy Person, thy love, thy favor, which is better than life itself, be the food of my soul every day and all the day, that by living a life of faith upon thee here, I may be fully preparing in body, soul, and spirit, for the everlasting enjoyment of my God in glory hereafter.

C H A P. XI.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle here takes up the Subject again concerning Election. He states the Doctrine particularly, as relating to the Jew and to the Gentile.

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not, what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image* of Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear: unto this day,

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

The doctrine of election hath been, and must be, to every carnal mind, of all others the most offensive. And as the Apostle, when entering upon this Epistle, engaged in it, with a special view to establish the Church in the grand truth, of justification before God in CHRIST, without the deeds of the law; this involved in it the doctrine of election. And the Apostle, in the *ninth* Chapter, devoted the whole of it to this one purpose. And, in that very interesting part of the Epistle, he most fully proved the certainty of the doctrine, in the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles. Foreseeing, however, that what he had there advanced, would rouse the resentment of the carnal and ungodly, and that some would misconstrue the doctrine, as though the whole body of the Jews had been rejected of God; he enters upon this Chapter with shewing, the mistake of such men, and in his own instance proves, that there were among the Jews, as well as among the Gentiles, the LORD's chosen ones. He begins the Chapter with a question, which was *Paul's* usual method, when he had some grand, and momentous point of doctrine, more particularly to establish, in order that he might the better confirm it. *Hath* God (saith he) *cast away his people?* And, he answers it with a kind of abhorrence; God *forbid!* Yea, the whole of God's purposes, is with an eye to the preservation of his people. The whole, and every individual of that mystical body the LORD gave to his SON before the world, is to be gathered out of the present time-state of the Church. It was for this Church, the LORD went forth in acts of creation. Every thing in nature, and in providence, is made to minister to this one purpose. And when the grand object, in the recovery of the Church is accomplished, from the present time-state in which she is now involved; the earth itself, with all that is in it, will be done away, like the scaffolding for a building, which is taken down when the building itself is finished; and CHRIST

will bring home his Church to the eternal state of glory all along intended. The Apostle intimates, that this hath been the design of JEHOVAH, from the beginning. And in proof, he adverts to a well-known part of the scripture history, in the days of *Elijah*: 1 Kings xix. 10—14. where, in the worst of times, there were in *Israel* seven thousand, whom the LORD, by electing grace, had preserved from the general apostacy. And hence *Paul*, in a most decided and unanswerable manner shews, that as it is electing grace in GOD, and not the smallest merit of man, which makes this difference there must be, for the carrying on the LORD's designs in relation to CHRIST's Church, in the present time, and in all times, until the whole purposes of the LORD in his Church are accomplished; *a remnant according to the election of grace*. For, such is the everlasting and unalterable nature of things in their distinct properties, that grace in GOD, and merit in man; (if he had any,) must be always opposite to each other. It ceaseth to be grace, if man obtains any thing by merit. And thus the Apostle, in a single verse, proves beyond all possible dispute, that all the Church of GOD, in every single instance receives, from beginning to end, in electing, regenerating, redeeming, justifying, sanctifying love, is wholly of grace. Through all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory, there is, there can be, not an atom in either, but what springs from this source. *This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.* Isaiah xliii. 21.

But, while the Apostle thus clearly and unanswerably sets the doctrine of election upon its own just basis, he again foresaw an objection, which the unbelieving part of mankind would bring still against it. *Israel*, that is, *Israel* as a nation in the flesh, had not obtained what they sought after. But the election (saith he) hath. So that here seemed some difficulty. Nay, the objector would add; it is said, that GOD gave to them that were blinded a spirit of slumber, that they should not see. And the Apostle makes quotations, both from the Prophets *David*, and *Isaiah*, in confirmation. Isaiah vi. 9. Psm. lxix. 22, 23. But these points, so far from becoming arguments, to call in question the reality of the doctrine itself, only tend the more to establish it. Every thing in the word of GOD, connected with the history of the Church, proves GOD's original and eternal choice, in the appointment. And, it is impossible to trace that history, through any of the several parts of it, without being led to see, the LORD's distinguishing grace, and mercy, ordering and directing the whole.

In following up the Apostle's statement, as here given, between the Church and the world, between the *remnant*, as he calls them, according to the election of grace, and the *rest* which he describes as *blinded*, it may not be improper to call in to our aid, what the word of GOD hath said, in relation to both; by which, under divine teaching, we shall discover, that while the *one* received all from grace, and therefore had nothing to boast, but every thing to be thankful for; the *other* had no right to complain, having no pretensions to divine favor, and therefore no injustice done him. This view of the subject may be made evident, under both branches of it.

In relation to the Church. When it pleased God, in his threefold character of Persons, to raise up a Church, at the head of which the SON of GOD in our nature was placed, to be for JEHOVAH's glory and the Church's happiness; the LORD was pleased to love this Church with an everlasting love, and in proof of it, chose this Church, in all the individual members of it, in CHRIST: gave them being in CHRIST, and a well-being of endless life and blessedness in CHRIST; predestinating them to the adoption of sons, and appointing them to an everlasting state of holiness, and glory, in CHRIST; or, to speak in Scripture language, *that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.* Ephes. i. 4, 5, 6.

Thus ordaining, and appointing things, in the infinite mind and will of JEHOVAH, before all worlds; the events, which were to take place during the time-state of the Church, could not be supposed as counteracting what had been before arranged in eternity; but rather promoting, and bringing about, the LORD's original designs and purposes. When, therefore, the LORD went forth in acts of creation, and the Church, which had existed in the divine mind from all eternity, was now to be brought forth into being in the *Adam*-nature so ordained; the fall which followed, and in which the whole Church, as well as the whole world in the *Adam*-race were involved, could not do away GOD's purposes, neither destroy that grace-union with CHRIST, which arose out of an everlasting love, incapable of being lessened or changed. It might, as it did indeed, lay the foundation for bringing greater glory to the LORD, in affording occasion, as had been before determined, for the Son of God, in the nature of his Church, to redeem her from the ruins of the fall, and for raising her up a spotless Church, to be the partaker with him, of all his communicable glory, in his kingdom for ever. Here we discover somewhat of the electing love of God, to the Church. To this source, as to a fountain, must be ascribed all the blessings manifested in such a distinguishing way, as is discovered, in the several streams, of redeeming, calling, justifying, sanctifying grace, *which maketh glad the city of God.*

In relation to the world, by which I mean the Christless world, the doctrine is equally plain and evident. The whole as well as the Church, had their being in *Adam*, the one common head. And, had they continued in the perfection of being in which they were created, this creature-perfection, with all its happiness, would have continued with them. But when in *Adam* all fell, and none but those who from grace-union in CHRIST, were to be recovered by CHRIST; of consequence, those who never had any other relation to CHRIST, than as his creatures, and not the members of his mystical body, could not be interested in his salvation. The *one* could not lose their blessings in CHRIST, because, as members of his body, they were part of CHRIST. The *other* could not receive benefit from CHRIST, having no union with CHRIST. And indeed, had the fall never taken place, the consequence of election would have still made a striking difference, between the Church of CHRIST, and the world. For while the world, in the *Adam*-nature derived from the first man, could have arrived to no higher source, than the nature from whence it originated; the Church from her union with CHRIST, and interest in

CHRIST as her Head, must have had communion in all that belonged to CHRIST, and enjoyed the peculiar and personal blessings founded in that union, in time, and to all eternity.

Here then we may safely rest. CHRIST and his Church are One. And by electing love, with all its blissful properties, every child of GOD, who is conscious, that by regenerating grace he is brought out of the Adam-nature of the fall, into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD; may well contemplate, for it is his privilege, and must be his happiness so to do, the wonderful subject, with the most profound reverence, adoration, humbleness of soul, and praise to GOD, in his daily walk through life. Oh! how often, and how earnest, will that cry of the soul arise before GOD, when, with the astonishment of the Apostle, he will feel himself constrained to say, LORD! *how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not unto the world?* John xiv. 22.

And, in respect to the Christless world, the fall of man cannot, in its nature and consequences, be a source of disquietude to the Church, more than the fall of Angels. *Secret things belong to the LORD our GOD; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever.* Deut. xxix. 29. The LORD's sovereignty is an everlasting answer to all the cavils of the ungodly. Neither can the justice of GOD be impeached, if sin brings forth death; for this is but the natural consequences of *cause and effect*. And the words of our LORD are sweetly formed, for the uninterrupted repose of all his children, when at any time (tempted by the world, by Satan, or the ill-judged and mistaken feelings of nature, untaught by grace,) unbecoming thoughts may arise in the mind. *At that time JESUS answered and said, I thank thee, O FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, FATHER! for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Matt. xi. 25, 26.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh*, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the re-

conciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead?

16 For if the first fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgements, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

The Apostle all along must be considered, as speaking of a distinction, between *Israel* after the flesh, and the *Israel* of God by promise. The *Israel* after the flesh, had no privileges, but in the outward ministry of the word. The *Israel* of promise, though they stumbled in the *Adam*-fall in common with the rest, and for a while (as in the instance of those who crucified *CHRIST*, but afterwards were pricked to the heart and saved: Acts ii. 23. 37.) were living without God and without *CHRIST*; yet being in the Covenant, were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and saved with an everlasting salvation. If the Reader, in going over those and the like passages of Scripture, had these things always in remembrance, it would serve, under God, to throw a great light upon the subject throughout.

The figure *Paul* useth, of the olive tree wild by nature, and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, is beautifully chosen, to represent not only the Gentile Church incorporated into *CHRIST* in distinction to the Jewish Church; but also hath an allusion to both Jew and Gentile, yea the whole Church, in being taken from the old *Adam*-nature of the fall, and by sovereign grace, made a right noble plant in *CHRIST JESUS*. The Apostle's expression in allusion to *CHRIST*, is not

only very blessed, in that it refers to the perfection of CHRIST, *for* his people, and *to* his people; but it runs it up to the first, original, and eternal cause, in the holiness of CHRIST's nature, as the first fruit, and root of all. For CHRIST is the root, as well as the offspring of *David*. And, CHRIST was first chosen in the infinite mind of JEHOVAH, and then the Church in him, before the foundation of the world. Ephesians i. 4.

It would be well, if this grand and fundamental truth of our most holy faith, was fully formed, and established in the mind, in order to help us to right apprehensions of what CHRIST is in himself, and what he is to his people. Every thing is in CHRIST of holiness. Every thing is of CHRIST *for* holiness. And he is made of GOD every thing to us *in* holiness, in being our *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the LORD*. I Cor. i. 30, 31. One or two words, on those great points, of CHRIST as he is in himself, and as he is to his people, will serve, under grace, to put this matter in a clear light; and, if the LORD be our teacher, we shall enter into a right apprehension of the Apostle's expression: *For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.*

Now *first*, in relation to that holy, spotless, portion of our nature, taken by the SON of GOD into union with himself, nothing can be more evident, than that it was wholly a right seed; for it was underrived from the fallen stock, and not formed after the ordinary method of generation. So that CHRIST was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. Heb. vii. 26. And, what is highly proper to be understood, but hath not been as generally considered as it ought, that when to the infinite mind, and fore-knowledge of JEHOVAH, this holy portion of our nature came up before him and before all worlds; all his seed were in him, beheld in him, and considered as part of himself: *chosen in him*, as Scripture expresseth it, *to be holy and without blame before him in love*. Ephes. i. 4. In this sense, the Apostle's words appear most blessed. The *first fruit* holy, the *lump* also holy. The *root* holy, and consequently the *branches*. In CHRIST his whole Church was contained. Just as the first root of any tree, planted in the earth, contained in it, all the after trees, and branches to come from it. And, as *Levi* is said to *have been in the loins of his father Abraham, when Melchizedec met him and blessed him*: (Heb. vii. 10.) So the Church, in all her individual members, was in CHRIST the seed of CHRIST; and blessed in CHRIST, from, and to all eternity. Hence all these sweet promises of JEHOVAH to his SON: *I will pour my SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring*. Isaiah xlv. 3. Hence the same repeated: *My SPIRIT that is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth, and for ever*. Isaiah lix. 21. Reader! I beseech you, pause over the lovely view, for it is most lovely! Oh! what a thought for a child of GOD to cherish in his bosom, that not only *He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one*; Heb. ii. 11. but every one of CHRIST's seed, was in CHRIST, chosen in CHRIST, included in CHRIST, and (as the branch in the root) holy in CHRIST's holiness, before GOD for ever!

And *secondly*: from this holiness in CHRIST and from CHRIST, the holiness of the Church must be wholly formed and derive all her holiness. For, as all original sin is from Adam; so all original holiness is from CHRIST. So Paul speaks, when saying that, *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 19. And the sanctification of the Church is wholly ascribed, to *the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all.* For *by one offering he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 10. 14. So that the sanctification of the Church is not *in* them, but *for* them. Not in any act of *theirs*, but in the act of CHRIST. Not in any holiness wrought *within* them, but *without* them. The happy partakers of CHRIST's holiness do no more towards their sanctification, than towards their justification. So saith the Scriptures: and so their souls, when taught of God, bear testimony. For Paul, speaking to the Church at Corinth, when declaring the grace of God shewn them in their recovery from the Adam-nature of sin, saith: *And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD.* 1 Cor. vi. 11. And all the sweet and gracious effects, which flow from the in-dwelling residence of GOD the HOLY GHOST in their bodies, which are his temple, and which manifest themselves in their life and conversation; are not their sanctification, but the result of their being sanctified. These are the *fruits*, not the *root*: the *effects*, not the *cause*. The one compleat source of the sanctification of the Church, as it appears before GOD, is *the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all.* And it is the testimony of GOD the HOLY GHOST concerning it, that JESUS *also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* Heb. xiii. 12. And, it is as expressly said to be the will of GOD in this offering, and for this purpose: *By the which will we are sanctified.* Heb. x. 10. And when GOD the HOLY GHOST, by the sweet constraining influences of his grace, *worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure*; opens to our view, the LORD CHRIST, in all his offices, characters, and relations; gives us to see CHRIST as made of GOD unto us all these, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; and both teacheth, and enableth us, how to live upon CHRIST, in the enjoyment of all these: then, do we enter into the blessed apprehension of our union with CHRIST, and communion with CHRIST; and learn, by heart-felt experience, that as *the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy: and as the root is holy, so are the branches.*

I stay not to make observations upon what is so abundantly plain as to need no observation, that, what the Apostle hath said, respecting the rejection of the Jew, and the calling of the Gentile, refers to the several ministrations in the Church, in the different ages, and under the different dispensations of it. CHRIST's Church is but one. And that Church hath been set up, with her glorious Head, and Husband, from everlasting. Their names all given, and numbered. And hence, all Israel that is, all the true Israel of GOD, given by the FATHER to the SON, and redeemed from the Adam nature of the fall by the SON, shall be saved; and in the effectual call of GOD the SPIRIT, shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth. And these blessed events are

included in what is said, and as the Prophet foretold, of *the Deliverer coming out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob*. Isaiah lix. 20.

Reader! I pray you to pause over the wonderful account, of what is related in this Chapter. And, if in the contemplation of the vast subject, the Apostle *Paul*, who had been caught up to the third heaven, and drank so deep into the mysteries of the Gospel, was constrained to cry out, as he hath here done: *Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Think, with what veneration and awe, men of less knowledge in the divine science, ought to receive the sublime truths of God; referring all of the works and counsel of God into God's own wise, and unerring will, and pleasure. Every thing in God, and from God, must necessarily be imperfectly understood by creatures, of the limited, and scanty apprehension of man. GOD in CHRIST, the SON of GOD tabernacling in our nature, his Church one in him, falling into apostacy by sin, recovered by sovereign grace, the Church branching out into the double family of Jew and Gentile, the LORD's ways in the call of the Gentile and the rejection of the Jew, together with all the wonderful events accomplished in bringing home the Church, through all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory: all these, and numberless other points connected with the vast subject, direct the mind into such a depth of mystery, that we are unavoidably led to the same view as the Apostle; convinced, that the ways and works of God, toward his Church and people, never could have been conceived, much less understood, had they not been graciously revealed by Him. Oh! wonderful Counsellor! Oh! gracious design of love and favor to the Church! What will be the wonders of eternity, when the whole shall come to be unfolded to the wondering world, of angels, and of men; and all will be found directed, to give glory, and honor, and power, to *Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, for ever, and ever, Amen.*

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, Reader! and, beholding the rejection of *Israel* as a nation, after all their high privileges; consider what may be, what will be, the rejection of any, and of every mere nominal Church, which hath the *form*, but is destitute of the *power*, of godliness! To this our guilty sinful land, and to every CHRIST-despising generation like the present, how awful that Scripture sounds, in trembling accents: *If GOD spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee!*

Almighty Sovereign, LORD of Heaven and earth! give thy re-deemed grace to receive all thy wise, and unerring appointments, with humble joy, and reverence. All must be right; because thou, LORD, hast done it. Let every one taught of GOD, enter into a full apprehension of that most precious truth: *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty. Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!*

And, amidst all the discouragements of the present day, though like the Prophet we find cause to mourn in secret, at the depressed state of Zion; yet let this always comfort: *even now at the present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Reader! forget not that it is grace, yea, all grace. May you and I have grace, to give our GOD all the glory!

C H A P. XII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter, the Apostle shews some of the blessed Effects, which, through Grace, arise out of a Justified, and Sanctified State, before God. And he very sweetly proves thereby, the Work of Grace upon the Soul.

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

In order to a right apprehension of the Apostle's meaning, we must carefully keep in remembrance, all that went before. *Paul* begins at this Chapter to shew, what gracious consequences must follow, in the life of a child of God, brought into the blessed enjoyment, of being justified freely before God, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. He had in the foregoing Chapters, very fully displayed the electing love of God the FATHER, the redeeming grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the regenerating work of GOD the SPIRIT, upon the souls of God's people. Having therefore shewn, both the ground-work, and superstructure of the Church's mercies, and traced them up to their fountain-head, in the Covenant-love and faithfulness of JEHOVAH, in his three-fold character of Persons; he

now calls upon the Church, with all the earnestness and affection of a brother, to live by faith, in the daily, hourly enjoyment of those glorious privileges. *I beseech you therefore brethren, (saith he,) by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

It becomes a point of infinite importance to the peace and comfort of every child of God, to have a right apprehension of what is here meant. My views, I confess, differ from all that I have heard or read upon the subject. I therefore, very affectionately, entreat the Reader to look up to the Almighty Author of his holy word, who guided his servant the Apostle's pen, that the LORD the SPIRIT may be his teacher in the perusal of it. And my soul is looking also to the same matchless Instructor, that both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* may together be taught of GOD.

I will first beg to observe, what appears to me *cannot* be the sense and meaning of the passage, according to true scriptural grounds of faith, before I venture to offer, what appears to me *to be*, the real meaning of it. And when I have presented both before the Reader, I shall very humbly leave him to form, under the LORD, his own conclusions.

And here I begin with observing, that the *living sacrifice*, which the Apostle calls upon justified believers in CHRIST to present unto GOD, cannot possibly mean any thing of their own; for CHRIST is the One only sacrifice before GOD, and *by that one offering of himself once offered, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 10, 14. Neither can the *holiness* the Apostle speaks of, in which they are to present their bodies, mean any holiness of their own; for there is none holy but the LORD; and the Church hath no holiness but *in CHRIST* and *from CHRIST*. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Isaiah liv. 17. And *Paul* could not be supposed to mean the holiness of the creature; for he had told the Church but just before, in this Epistle, that his body was a body of sin and death. Chap. vii. 14—24. He could not mean, therefore, that the Church was to present *their bodies* a living sacrifice, and *holy*, unto the LORD. And equally foreign to the Apostle's meaning must it have been, to suppose, that the Church was to look for acceptance in themselves before GOD, in any righteousness of their own; for *Paul* himself taught, under the HOLY GHOST, that it is *to the praise of the glory of God's grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* Ephes. i. 6. So that upon none of those grounds, could *Paul* be supposed to recommend the Church to present their bodies before GOD.

Having shewn, and I hope upon true scriptural authority, what cannot be supposed to be the sense of the Apostle's words, I will now venture, and upon the same authority, to bring before the Reader what appears to me to be his meaning.

Let it be again remembered, that the Apostle had before fully established the doctrine of the Church being elected, called, justified, and sanctified by GOD in CHRIST. He begins an exhortation from these premises. And that little word, *therefore*, as an illative particle, he useth, as deducing all he had to say, and all he entreated from them, in consequence thereof. *I beseech you therefore brethren, Brethren in CHRIST*, and as he elsewhere calls them, *holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, partakers of CHRIST*, interested

from an union *with* CHRIST, in all CHRIST's communicable holiness, grace, and glory. See Heb. iii. 14. and John xvii. 22.

Next, I pray the Reader to observe the Apostle's expression, when he saith, I beseech you therefore brethren, *by the mercies of God*. What mercies did the Apostle mean? All are mercies we have from GOD. But I humbly conceive *Paul* alluded to what the Prophet taught the Church, and which *Paul* himself afterwards explained, *the sure mercies of David*. If the Reader before he prosecutes the subject further, would consult the scriptures on this point, I venture to believe, that he will be inclined to conclude with me, that such GOD the HOLY GHOST referred to in this passage. (Compare Isaiah iv. 3. with Acts xiii. 32—39.) And, if this be supposed, *Paul's* exhortation will amount to this, that he desired the Church by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST, to come to GOD in CHRIST, and make this the one, and the only foundation in coming.

Now then we arrive at the main subject of enquiry, concerning this presentation of their bodies, which is to be, *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, and (saith Paul) your reasonable service*. Holy scripture reveals no sacrifice but one. And this indeed is a *living sacrifice*; for JESUS ever liveth to make it effectual, 'as a life-giving principle to his people. Having opened a new and living way by his blood, he ever liveth to keep it open by his intercession. And GOD the HOLY GHOST by putting forth the efficacy of it, unto the persons of the redeemed, makes it truly living in their hearts and consciences. In this new and living way we are commanded to come, and very blessed are the consequences promised to our coming; when *our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*. Compare Heb. x. 19—22. with Ezek. xxxvi. 25. (I need not tell the Reader, that the waters here spoken of by the Prophet, means the blood of CHRIST; for the blood of CHRIST is called *the blood of sprinkling*, Heb. xii. 24. And the HOLY GHOST is never said to be water sprinkled, or put upon us, but a well of water *in us*. John iv. 14.)

If, therefore, the Apostle had in view, (as it should seem from all that he had said before in this Epistle he had,) CHRIST the living sacrifice, in whom, and by whom, the Church alone is justified; then in that living sacrifice and Person of her LORD, she was to present her whole body. And this, indeed, is a living and life-giving sacrifice, truly holy, acceptable unto GOD, and our reasonable service; for it is most reasonable that the services of spiritual worshippers, acting under the SPIRIT's constant influences, should thus present themselves continually before the LORD. But unless the words of the Apostle be considered in this sense, it is impossible to conceive, that *Paul* should direct the Church to do, what he himself could never perform, to present his body a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto GOD, when he groaned daily under a body of sin and death. Yea, he had before said to the Church, if CHRIST *be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness*. Chap. viii. 10. And how shall a body *dead* because of sin, present itself a *living sacrifice*?

Reader! *The LORD give you a right understanding in all things*. 2 Tim. ii. 7. And, if under divine teaching, your views and mine correspond, we shall both see, and through grace be enabled to

follow, what the Apostle so affectionately recommends, when justified in the Person and work of CHRIST, by those mercies of God, to present our bodies indeed as well as our souls, daily, and hourly, upon the Altar of that living sacrifice, which is holy, acceptable unto God, and our reasonable service. For CHRIST is our New Testament Altar, (neither is there any other,) our sacrifice, and the sacrificer. And, as the whole person of every child of God, both soul and body, is united to CHRIST, both are included in this presentation. *He that is joined to the LORD is one spirit.* 1 Cor. vi. 17. And the LORD JESUS himself saith, speaking of the persons of his people. *That they all may be one, as thou FATHER art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* John xvii. 21. And, while we know that he abideth in us by the spirit which he hath given us, we know also, that our bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST, which is in us. 1 JOHN iii. 24. 1 Cor. vi. 19. And, as it is by consequence of this union in our souls with CHRIST as regeneration, we are made *partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*; and at the separation by death of soul and body, the soul joins the society of the spirits of just men made perfect, until the morning of the resurrection; so, from the same union with CHRIST, the body at death sleeps in JESUS, until the last day, and equally one with CHRIST in body as well as soul; the body will be raised by virtue of it, to live with CHRIST both body and soul for ever. The HOLY GHOST bears sweet testimony to this most blessed truth in his word. *For if the SPIRIT of him that raised up JESUS from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his SPIRIT that dwelleth in you.* Rom. viii. 11. See 2 Pet. i. 4.

I do not think it necessary, after having so largely stated what appears to me to be the Apostle's meaning of the daily presentation of the child of God in the first verse of this chapter, to offer any thing more on what follows, in relation to the effects which arise out of it. No one who is a child of God, and who daily lives in acts of faith and grace upon the Person of CHRIST and his living sacrifice, will be *conformed to this world*. A conformity to this world, and its vanities and customs, is wholly the reverse of a life of grace. For it is expressly said, that God in his foreknowledge of his children the Church, did predestinate them *to be conformed to the image of his Son*. Rom. viii. 20. So that the very predestination of the children is to this conformity to CHRIST, that CHRIST may be both the head to his body, and the first-born and brother among many brethren. And where this is the case, all such will be *transformed*, by the daily renewings of God the HOLY GHOST. And, as each regenerated soul is a member of CHRIST's mystical body; so, through grace, each will be led into the suited office of that membership, being manifestly a part of *the one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another*.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth on exhortation: he that giveth *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

16 *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Here are gracious directions, which arise out of a life of grace in the heart, and such as are suited to the whole members of CHRIST'S mystical body; both to the ministers and people. And what is necessary to be observed, they were not given for the Church in that age only, but had respect to the Church of GOD in all ages. I mention this the rather, because it might be supposed from what the Apostle saith about *prophecy*, that as the gift of prophecy, or fortelling future events, hath long since ceased, as being no longer necessary, this exhortation is done away. But the prophecy the Apostle seems to have had in view, when writing to the Church in common, as in this instance, had no reference whatever to that sense of prophesying which means predictions. *Propheying* is sometimes used for *preaching*. See Matt. vii. 22. And the Apostle recommended the Church at *Corinth*, to follow after charity, and to desire spiritual gifts, but

rather that they might prophesy. By which may be supposed he meant preaching, if the LORD should call them to it. 1 Cor. xiv 1.

In like manner, when the Apostle in this exhortation, recommends the Church not to be *slothful in business*; it cannot be supposed that he meant *worldly* business, and the concerns of this life. For, although it would be at all times reproachful for men to neglect the laudable and honest concerns of themselves and families, for the maintenance in the station of life where the LORD in his providence hath placed them; yet, for the most part, men are too much alive, and even the LORD's people also, to the pursuits of things temporal, to need exhortations on this point to worldly cares. It is plain that *Paul*, when he said, not slothful in business, meant *spiritual* business, for he immediately added, *fervent in spirit, serving the LORD*. And this became a sweet and gracious recommendation of the Apostle, and a proof of his feeling in himself what he had said to others just before, of being *kindly affectioned*. But had *Paul* been living in the present hour of the Church, what would he have said to that cold indifference which marks the age in the lukewarm, *Laodicean* spirit, so painful to the real follower of the LORD JESUS, and so highly reproved by CHRIST himself! Rev. iii. 15, 16.

There is not only a great loveliness in the christian graces which the Apostle hath enumerated in those verses, but also a beautiful order in the manner in which he hath marked them down. *Rejoicing in hope*, is very suitably placed before the being *patient in tribulation*. And the *rejoicing* with the happy, before the *weeping* with them that weep. For until the child of God is himself established in the grace of hope, he cannot know how to minister to others the consolation. Neither can one mingle the tear of grace with the mourner, unless he himself hath had his own tears mingled with the spiced wine of the pomegranate. I refer the Reader to my Commentary on these points for the right apprehension, according to my view, of those sweet and gracious employments. Rom. v. 1—5. and Matt. v. 1—12.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

What a very lovely view is here given of the Apostle's mind, in the recommendation he hath here set forth to the Church, in our dealings with our enemies! And how tenderly hath the Apostle enjoined it, as if conscious of the difficulty of the thing itself, in opening what he had to say, with *dearly beloved!* Reader! was there ever a recommendation like this, discoverable, but in the holy religion of the holy LORD JESUS? I pray the Reader to turn to the words of JESUS, and he will perceive from whom *Paul* learnt the sweet

lesson, which he here recommends to others. Matt. v. 43—48. and Commentary. And what a beautiful figure is added by the Apostle of heaping coals of fire on the adversary's head. Not to hurt, neither to expose him to the anger of the LORD; but to melt down his angry passions, and to win him over to the cause of GOD and CHRIST. Oh! the blessedness of that grace of the LORD, which, when in lively exercise in the heart, can, and will, enable a poor sinner thus to feel for another poor sinner; and in the contemplation of the blessed JESUS, *to recompence good for evil, and to overcome evil with good!*

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! in the unceasing view of thee, and thy living sacrifice, through the mercies of Covenant-love, oh! may I be enabled to come daily, hourly, to the throne of grace, and present myself in thy holiness, for acceptance before GOD, as the reasonable service of thy redeemed. And do thou LORD, grant me grace, to be daily, hourly, weaning from a world, from which I am momentarily departing, that I may no longer be conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of my mind, in the unceasing renewings of the HOLY GHOST. Yes! thou dear LORD! through thee I shall prove my membership in CHRIST, and with his Church, in the exercise of all those sweet graces thy servant Apostle hath enumerated. And do thou, my honored LORD, so help me on by thy gracious, unceasing manifestations, through the whole of my walk and conversation while here below, that I may daily feel my need of thee, and daily act every grace upon thee, and by thee. Surely, LORD! grace is kept alive by grace received from my LORD. And, if my LORD will give my poor soul out of his rich fulness, grace for grace, then will his grace be manifested in all my life and conversation. Living *upon* CHRIST, walking *with* CHRIST, and receiving *from* CHRIST, then will all the fruits and effects of his grace be holiness, and CHRIST my portion for ever.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

Here are various Directions concerning Christian Graces. And the Chapter concludes with an affecting call of the Apostle from the shortness of Life, to be always clothed with CHRIST.

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which *is* good, and thou shalt have praise of the same :

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute *is due* ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

The obedience which the Apostle enforceth to the civil powers, is abundantly heightened in the consideration, that what *Paul* here recommended to the Church then at *Rome*, of a peaceable submission to the higher powers, which were heathens ; comes home with double argument, considered as to Christian Princes. And, indeed, the motives which the Apostle adopts in recommending those duties, are in themselves unanswerable. All government must be the result of divine ordination. And the LORD's design in that ordination is gracious. His Church cannot but derive blessedness from it, however it may be administered, agreeably to that comprehensive promise, Rom. viii. 28. And, if the LORD enjoined his Church, as he did, when going into captivity, to seek the peace of the city, whither they were carried, and to pray unto the LORD for it, for in the peace

thereof, they should have peace; how much more under the fostering care of a christian government, are those duties enforced? Jerem. xxix. 7.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

There would be a considerable difficulty in the right apprehension of what the Apostle here saith, of awakening out of sleep, if he had not in the preceding part of this Epistle sufficiently shewn, that the Church was not only in an awakened state, but in a truly converted and justified state before GOD. But, beheld in this point of view, all difficulty is at once removed, and the words of the Apostle, in those few verses, appear in all the loveliness of exhortation to the Church of GOD. The sleep which the Apostle had in view, is that sleep too common among believers, to which GOD's dear children are but too much addicted. Not the sleep of death, for they have passed from death unto life. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*: Ephes. ii. 1. But it means a sleepy, drowsy frame of mind, such as the Church complained of, and out of which the LORD called her. Song v. 2. See Commentary there. The *wise* virgins, as well as the *foolish*, are described as fallen into a state of sleep while the bridegroom tarried. Matt. xxv. 5. See Commentary also. If I detain the Reader over the view of the Apostle's words, it shall only be to observe, that the Church of GOD in all ages hath been but too often discovered in this state; and, perhaps, in none more than in the present. And, therefore, if with an eye to the account, as here stated by the Apostle, we consider *the high time* Paul mentions, of *awakening out of sleep*, as if personally directed by the HOLY GHOST to each child of GOD, to whom this *Poor Man's Commentary* may come, I shall hope the LORD will commission it to usefulness.

Every child of GOD, though in a justified state before GOD, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, may be said to be in a sleepy, drowsy frame of soul, when grace is not in lively exercise, and the goings forth upon the Person, and blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST are not continual. Time was, when the Day-spring from on high first dawned upon the soul, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD first shone in the face of JESUS CHRIST; that his name was as the richest ointment poured forth. The

soul ran, yea, fled to CHRIST, like as on *the chariots of Amminadib*. And the heart was prompted to ask of all we met, *saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* If this be not the case now, is it not because a sleepiness is crept into the soul? If the bread of life is not daily sought for with the same keen desire as before, can any thing be plainer, than that the appetite is wanting? Reader! what view have you of this state of the case? Certainly if you and I do not feel our daily need of JESUS, yea, if a sense of our wants, and his all-sufficiency to supply, do not make him increasingly precious, somewhat is sadly out of tune in the heart. Though rooted in CHRIST, yet it is a wintry season, when the branches have neither leaves nor fruit. This was the charge which the LORD brought himself against his Church at *Ephesus*. Though the LORD knew her works, and her labor, and her patience, and bore testimony to her as his; yet, JESUS charged her with coldness. She had not lost *all* love to Him, but she had left her *first* love. Rev. ii. 1—7. Oh! my poor heart! What reproach is it, that He to whom I owe so much, should have so little of my affections! And, while I need him more, should manifest that love less! Reader! Is it your case? If so, is it not as *Paul* saith, *high time to awake out of sleep?*

But let us go one step further. From whence doth this spring, and where is the seat of the disease? Very plain it is, that the mind revolts at it, and the regenerated soul is continually reproaching itself in consequence thereof. The child of God feels evident principles of a different nature and tendency within him. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* Like *Paul*, *with the mind we serve the law of GOD, but with the flesh the law of sin.* So that there are two I's in every renewed man's nature. There is the I which serves the law of God. And there is the I which serves the law of sin. And painful and humbling as this review is, yet is it a blessed discovery, and which can never be made but by the SPIRIT'S teaching. The carnal, unawakened, unregenerated man knows it not; yea, indeed, it is impossible he should, for he feels it not, neither doth it exist in him. His spiritual part is unawakened, but remains as he was born, dead in trespasses and sins. So that there is no conflict in his heart. A *dead* soul can make no opposition to a *living* body, wholly employed under one form or other, in making *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* It is only when by the quickening and regenerating influences of the HOLY GHOST, the soul, which by nature is dead in trespasses and sins, is brought forth into life, that the warfare begins, and which never ends until the body drops into the grave.

Reader! do not dismiss the subject without taking with you the suitable improvements from it. There is much in it to humble the best and most faithful followers of the LORD. And there are some things connected with it, which under grace, may lead to other improvements. Let me beg my Reader's indulgence to offer a few words upon each. In the first place, there is much to humble the child of GOD, both before GOD, and to his own heart, when he beholds in himself those remains of indwelling corruption, and that he carries about with him such a body of sin and death, which harass and afflict the soul. What poverty, what leanness in spiritual enjoyments it occasions! How barren are ordinances, when grace

is low, and corruption high? The heart is like a captive in prison, when neither a sense of sin, nor of mercy, for the time, affects. A sense of want will quicken the desire; and when God the HOLY GHOST creates an hungering in the soul, and spreads Jesus with his banquet open to view, every thing is blessed then in the enjoyment. But, when the LORD the Comforter is away, and the soul asleep; means of grace, though still followed, degenerate into a mere form; and, however the shadow remains, the substance is wanting. Moreover, the evil of this drowsiness is not confined to the person of the child of God only, which is under its distressing influence, the whole Church is injured by it, CHRIST is dishonored, and, not unfrequently, occasion is afforded thereby for the enemy to blaspheme. *While men slept*, saith JESUS, (in that beautiful parable of the good seed,) *the enemy sowed tares*. And to what cause so likely is it in the present hour, that we can ascribe the awful heresies which have sprung up among us, even to the *denying of the LORD that bought them*; as the lukewarm, indifferent spirit, which hath been manifested in the Churches, to the great and distinguishing doctrines of our most holy faith? That temporizing conduct, that wish to avoid giving offence, that endeavour to make the iron and the clay join, in bringing together men of the most opposite principles, under the specious pretext of promoting the LORD's glory, by propagating his holy word; while concealing and keeping in the back ground an open profession of some of his most blessed truths, which truly honor him; what are all these, but some of the sad, sad consequences of a sleepy state of the Church, instead of casting off, and having no fellowship with the works of darkness, but as true soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, *putting on the whole armor of light*?

But I said, there are some things connected with this view of a sleepy frame in the Church, or in any individual of the Church, which, under grace, may lead to other improvements. And I will beg to mention a few of them. And, *first*. Nothing can be more evident, than that one gracious purpose, which the LORD intended from it is, to make *sin appear exceeding sinful*. No man, no angel, no, nor all the creatures of God, can tell, what sin is; or have they any adequate conceptions of its awfulness. The child of God therefore shall be taught, and feelingly taught too, somewhat of its dreadful nature, from the remains of in-bred and in-dwelling corruption in himself; and as the Prophet saith, *thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the LORD GOD of hosts*. Jeremiah ii. 19.

Secondly. This consciousness of a body of in-bred, in-dwelling sin, from which the soul, though renewed by grace, cannot disentangle itself, neither will be able, until life is over, serves, under grace, to keep open a constant spring of true sorrow and repentance in the heart. Paul the Apostle, though he had been caught up to the third heaven, and was himself a chosen vessel before God; yet was so sensible of this distressed state, that he went in great mourning of heart. *Oh! wretched man that I am, (said he,) who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. v. 24. It is very blessed to have

the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. 2 Cor. i. 9.

Thirdly. Perhaps there is hardly a cause, which relates to the state of the redeemed soul, groaning under the remains of corruption, more striking to shew, how the LORD overrules evil for good, than when by this process the believer is divorced from all self-righteousness. Nothing but the continual humblings of sin under grace, can accomplish this blessed purpose. We are so wedded to some fancied goodness in our poor fallen nature, that it requires frequent mortifications from human infirmities, to teach us what we are. And very blessed it is, when humbled to the dust before GOD, to be rooted out of it. The child of GOD is living nearer to the LORD, when humbled for some renewed instance of infirmity, than when lifted up, in some fancied work of self-righteousness. And far better is he that is made watchful and jealous over his own heart, by reason of conscious sin, than he that is made proud and secure in fancying himself something when he is nothing.

But *fourthly*, and above all. Whatever tends to endear CHRIST, and enhance to the soul the preciousness of JESUS, must be blessed. And, what can accomplish this purpose more, than a sense of our daily, momentarily need of him? Precious LORD! let me be any thing, or nothing, yea, worse than nothing, so that my soul be humbled and my GOD be exalted as the LORD my righteousness! Oh! for *grace to win CHRIST, and to be found in him: not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of CHRIST; the righteousness which is of GOD by faith!* Philip. iii. 8, 9.

Reader! it will be blessed, if your soul, and my soul, be taught, to mourn in secret, over a nature, which in its highest attainments, is still the subject of sin. And do not forget, how much we owe to grace, in thus having brought us acquainted with ourselves, to hide pride from our eyes! And, how blessed it is in GOD, to give us grace, to acknowledge before GOD, those remaining corruptions. And, let me beg the Reader to mark it down, as an unerring rule of grace in the heart, when we are led to see our corruptions, and to acknowledge them. But for grace, we should not have known them. Blessed be GOD! that while we are led to see, and know, and feel, what poor creatures we are in ourselves; we are led to see, and know, and enjoy also, our interest in JESUS. Oh! the preciousness of that holy Scripture: *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

REFLECTIONS.

SURELY the good order of society, and the general peace of states and kingdoms, are promoted, by wise laws, and regulations; and happy the nation, who hath the LORD for their GOD.

But, my soul! as thou art looking for a city which hath foundation, whose Builder and Maker is GOD; be thou on the watch tower, for the LORD's coming. And, aware that to thee the night of this wilderness-state is far spent, and the day of the immortal world is at

hand, which like the tide of a vast ocean is hastening to cover over the whole earth; oh! for grace to be weaned from all things here below, and to be ready at a moment's warning to mount up and meet the LORD in the air. Blessed LORD JESUS! be it my happiness, to be found waiting! And may GOD the SPIRIT put on CHRIST, and his righteousness on my soul, that when my LORD shall come, *I may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

C H A P. XIV.

CONTENTS.

To avoid unnecessary Contentions in the Church, from the Custom of Jews and Gentiles, the Apostle directs this Chapter to the mutual Accommodation of each, in Things of small Moment.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.

We shall derive great improvement from what is here said, with an eye to the spirit of accommodation, in things of small moment between Jew and Gentile, if we take occasion therefrom, to make use of the same kind of reasoning, in the circumstances which concern the weaker and humbler Christian. There are great diversities of gifts, the Apostle saith, in the Church; but it is the same SPIRIT, *who divideth to every man severally as he will.* 1 Cor. xii. 11. And there cannot be a more beautiful or engaging character in life, whether minister, or people, than the man who kindly and affectionately accommodates himself to the several situations of those in the Church, with whom he hath to do. For it is a point, which should never be lost sight of, that all the souls of the redeemed are equally dear to CHRIST. And, what is equally dear to Him, should be also equally dear to every one of his members. To bear with their infirmities, to watch over their weaknesses, to be gentle and forbearing, and in every department, to manifest the SPIRIT of CHRIST, while professing to be under the influence of CHRIST, is a blessed testimony of belonging to CHRIST; or, as Scripture beautifully expresses it: *strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees.* Isaiah xxxv. 4.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

I pass by the several circumstances related within these verses, interesting as they are, to call the Reader's attention to what the Apostle hath said, of the lives of God's people not being to themselves, but to the LORD; and their deaths the same. And to be sure, nothing can be more blessed, than the consideration. If there was no other passage in the word of God, in confirmation of the union and oneness between CHRIST and his people than this; the glorious truth, as it is here expressed, would be a full testimony. The Church of CHRIST, and every individual of that Church, hath life in CHRIST, and that from all eternity. And what comes *from* CHRIST, must lead *to* and terminate *in* CHRIST. They have their being *in* him, they derive all *from* him, they live *to* him: and in their departure, they die not as others die who die *out of* CHRIST, for they *sleep in* JESUS. So the Apostle expresses it. 1 Thess. iv. 14. And the voice John heard from heaven, when pronouncing them blessed, declared this as the cause of their blessedness: *they die in the LORD*. Rev. xiv. 13. Every one of the seed of CHRIST, is part of CHRIST. CHRIST and his seed are one. For, saith the Apostle, speaking of the Church, *we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*. Ephes. v. 30. Reader! do not lose sight of it, for it is most precious! And see to it, that there be a correspondence in every part of conversation. He that liveth *to* the LORD, liveth *on* the LORD, making CHRIST *the all in all*; living to him, by lively actings of faith, upon his Person, blood, and righteousness: such will die in the LORD. For God the FATHER's Covenant love and faithfulness, God the SON's finished redemption, and God the SPIRIT's life-giving power; these are the same in life and death: and as the faithful live, so they die, *rejoicing in hope of the glory of God*.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

I cannot forego the pleasure it gives me, in calling the Reader's attention to that sweet Scripture, which so blessedly speaks, of the great end and purpose of all CHRIST's ministry upon earth, for his people. *For to this end*, (saith Paul,) *CHRIST both died, and rose and revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living*. Precious JESUS! what proofs are here of thine unequalled love to thy Church? Thou art indeed, and justly so, the LORD of all; reigning in all, and through all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. Eternal, Almighty, and Everlasting Monarch! *Thy dead men shall live*. Yea, thou wilt raise the dead in trespasses and sins, to the life of grace here: And, thou wilt raise the dead in CHRIST, to the life of glory hereafter. Blessed JESUS! And wilt thou not raise my soul now, during all the time-state of the Church, to be above all my dying frames and dead affections? Art thou not, LORD, risen and revived, that thou mightest be LORD both of dead and living? Oh! for grace, daily to hear thy gracious and all-powerful voice saying: *I am the resurrection and the life! he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die!* John xi. 25, 26.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

What a very precious Scripture this is, in conclusion of what had been said, concerning all the controversies of meat and drink? *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink.* Here we have the decision. *Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.* I Cor. viii. 8. How everlastingly disposed the minds of men have been, in taking up with any thing short of the change of heart! This throws to the ground every attempt of compromise with God. Nothing short of the work of God the SPIRIT in regeneration, can bring sinners to God. It is the special, and peculiar office of God the HOLY GHOST, to effect this blissful change. He *convinceth of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* And, by holding up to the sinner's view, the Person, work, and glory of CHRIST, and working in the sinner's heart, faith to believe the record God hath given of his SON; he gives grace, to possess an interest, in all the communicable rights of the LORD JESUS, which he wrought for his people; and thus renders the kingdom of grace here, leading to a kingdom of glory hereafter, the privilege of the whole Church. Reader! doth your experience correspond with the Apostle's, and is this kingdom in your esteem, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST?* If so, sweet to the soul is the testimony of God the SPIRIT by the Apostle. *For he that in these things serveth CHRIST, is acceptable to God, in the beloved; and approved of men!*

22 Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

I only detain the Reader at the last clause of this Chapter, to observe, in what a tone of the most solemn decision, the LORD declares by his servant, that *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* We have a strong expression elsewhere, of the importance of faith, in the sight of

GOD, when it is said, that *without faith it is impossible to please God*. Heb. xi. 6. But here, the want of it is said to be sin. And what becomes of the multitude of services, alms-givings, charities, and benevolent institutions, unfounded in faith? According to this Scripture, it is not enough to say, they have no claims to divine favor; but they are exposed to divine wrath. *For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* According to this statement, (and let it be remembered it is scriptural,) there can be nothing to escape the LORD's displeasure, however specious it may appear to men; but what is undertaken with an eye to GOD in CHRIST. Every act of the creature, as the act of a sinful creature, must partake of sin. And, it is by faith only in CHRIST, that the iniquity of our most holy things are done away. Exod. xxviii. 38. But, if there be no respect to CHRIST in any act and faith of acceptance in Him, it is sin: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Perhaps it may be said, that upon this statement, all the high sounding deeds of thousands, which have filled the world with their praises, and their monuments, will come to nothing. No doubt they will. But it is not enough, according to this Scripture, merely to say, that they will come to nothing; for if they be found unfounded in CHRIST, they will be proved to be sin. And what a reverse of circumstances will take place at the great day of decision: while many who have given almost their body to be burned on the score of charity, but without faith in CHRIST, will be found in their very alms-deed in sin; many who have given nothing because they have had nothing to give, but the prayer of faith; will be then acknowledged, as the poor woman was by CHRIST when on earth, to have given a costly offering. Reader! may you and I have grace, to form a right estimate in all things. *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! In all the circumstances of life we may well bear with the weak in faith, and receive none to doubtful disputations, while earnest in the grand points of the cross to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. In meats, and drinks, and inventions of men, and carnal ordinances, there is nothing worth contending for. But while all outward things, though they make a great shew of will-worship, satisfy the unawakened; let it be my pursuit, the things of inward peace. For the LORD's kingdom *is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST*. Blessed LORD JESUS! grant that my life may be a life of faith on thee; and then will my death, be a death of security in thee; for living, or dying, I shall be thine. And to all the lesser circumstances of life, may my walk through the world, in the unavoidable intercourses of it, be conducted with love to thy people from love to thee. Never to wound one of CHRIST's little ones here below, much less to destroy his comfort, though nothing can destroy his everlasting happiness for whom CHRIST died. And do thou, dearest LORD, grant me increasing faith in thee, since all, and every act, without an eye to thee, and thy righteousness, is sin.

C H A P. XV.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle exhorts the strong in Faith, to bear the Infirmities of the weak. He recommends the Example of JESUS, and concludes with recommending the Church to the God of Peace.

WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus :

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

It is always blessed to eye CHRIST. And, in the use the Apostle here makes of the LORD's example, as not seeking self pleasing in ease and enjoyment, but JEHOVAH's glory, and his Church's welfare, there is somewhat very blessed, and interesting. It would be well for the Church, if the lovely pattern of the Great Head and Husband of his people were always in view. Both the strong and the weak, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, in the LORD's household, would find constant blessedness, in taking CHRIST for their example. It is said, that even CHRIST *pleased not himself.* By which is not meant, that CHRIST's pleasure, differed from the FATHER's. For one and the same mind was in both. JESUS, ages before he openly tabernacled in substance of our flesh, when speaking of the SPIRIT of prophecy, said: *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.* Or, as the words are rendered in the margin of the Bible, *in the midst of my bowels;* meaning, as wrapped up in his very nature; so much oneness being between them. Psm. xl. 8.

But, by *not pleasing himself*, is intended to shew, that in the accomplishment of the great purpose for which he came upon earth, he had the great object in view of the FATHER's glory, and his people's happiness. And nothing of self-accommodation or ease was considered by the LORD JESUS, while in the pursuit of these important designs. And, among many instances which might have been produced in confirmation of it, (for CHRIST's whole life was a life of suffering,) *Paul* brings forward one, which the Scripture noticed concerning CHRIST, and which in its bosom comprehended many others: *but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.* Now this was happily chosen by the Apostle, in the illustration of this great point, as well as to open to the Church, other important views of CHRIST. For these are the words of CHRIST himself, addressed to the FATHER, spoken by the SPIRIT of prophecy; and serve as a key, to open to the Church the whole Psalm, from whence *Paul* makes the quotation of them. I beg the Reader before he proceeds further, for his confirmation in this interesting point, to turn to the lxixth Psalm; and by comparing what is there said, with other Scriptures, he will be led to conclude, that CHRIST is the sole Speaker, through the whole of it. And a most blessed proof the whole brings to *the truth as it is in JESUS.* Compare verse 9 with John ii. 17. Psm. cxix. 139. Compare verse 4, with John xv. 25. Psm. xxxv. 19. Compare verse 3, with John xix. 28. Psm. cxix. 82. 123. Compare verse 21, with Matt. xxvii. 34. 48. But, when the Reader hath diligently examined those Scriptures, let him not turn away from the passage *Paul* hath here quoted, before that he hath first considered a little more particularly, the blessedness of it. The *reproaches* which the LORD JESUS had in contemplation when he thus expressed himself, no doubt, in the first, and principal sense, had respect to JEHOVAH; and which CHRIST, by the humiliation of himself, and his sacrifice on the cross, came on earth to do away. The Church of GOD, as well as the whole of mankind, in the *Adam*-nature of a fallen state, had reproached GOD. His holy name, his attributes, his law, his sanctuary; all had been blasphemed, and polluted. When, therefore, JESUS came to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself; these reproaches were charged upon CHRIST, as the Church's representative and surety. Isaiah liii. 6. And, it was in the view of this blasphemy and prophanation of the LORD in the temple, which gave occasion for CHRIST to manifest his zeal for his FATHER's honor, when he drave the buyers and sellers before him; and brought to mind to the Apostles this very Scripture. John ii. 15—17. But GOD the FATHER was also *reproached*, as well as CHRIST's own Person, when He, whom GOD had declared by a voice from heaven, to be his beloved SON, was charged with blasphemy, a glutton, a wine-bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners, and as having a devil. GOD was reproached in the first instance in all these, and the reproaches fell also upon CHRIST. And all the *reproaches* of CHRIST's people, in their sins and iniquities, which justly became their reproach, fell on CHRIST; that is, were put upon CHRIST. He, as the head of his body the Church, bore the whole in his own body on the tree, *when he died the just for the unjust to bring us unto GOD.* I Pet. iii. 18. Then it was, as the Almighty Speaker said, in the sweet Psalm before quoted; *I restored that which I took not away;*

Psm. lxi. 4. Reader! all these precious things, and no doubt much more are included, in what *Paul* hath here noticed, of the reproaches which fell on CHRIST. Judge you then, with what a fullness of propriety, might he recommend the strong in faith, to accommodate themselves to their weaker brethren; when this strong One, this *Gheber* of his Church, *endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself*, that his redeemed should not *be wearied nor faint in their minds*. Psm. lxxxix. 19. Jerem. xxxi. 22. Heb. xii. 3.

Largely as I have trespassed in looking at this most interesting portion of Scripture, I must not suffer the Reader to depart from it, without first taking with him, the blessed conclusion the Apostle hath made of it: because it not only is applicable in the present instance, but in every other, where GOD the HOLY GHOST leads his servants to make quotations from his holy word, in confirmation of his doctrines. The Apostle saith, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*. And the Apostle adds a prayer, that these blessed effects might follow in the Church. Now then, from hence we are authorized, as from many other parts of Scripture to conclude, that the whole body of the divine word, as well as the prophecy of Scripture, is not of *any private interpretation*. 2 Pet. i. 20. Every part and portion of it, is given with the express view, under the Almighty Author's teaching, to make the Church wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, from the continual and unceasing ministry of it, in his Church, is to bring the Church acquainted more and more, with the Person, character, offices, work, and glory, of her right lawful LORD. And these great objects, GOD the HOLY GHOST is continually accomplishing, in the hearts of the LORD's redeemed ones, by his gracious ministry. Reader! are you acquainted with these things? do you give yourself wholly to them, in the concerns of salvation? Is CHRIST in your view, all and in all? If so, it is the LORD the HOLY GHOST, which is your Teacher. For both by his personal Ministry, as JESUS declared of him, (John xiv. 16, 17.) and by his written word, he it is, the LORD which *teacheth you to profit*. And you yourself become a living witness to this very Scripture, that the God of patience and consolation hath caused these things to be written for your learning, that you *through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*.

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust:

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

There is somewhat very striking in what the Apostle here saith of our LORD, when he calls him, a *Minister of the circumcision*. He was indeed a Minister. For, as he saith himself, he came *not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*. Matt. xx. 28. Reader! have you ever considered the grace and condescension of the LORD JESUS, in taking this humble title? Fallen as we are in the world, into the very dregs of time, the ministry is considered as only suited for the humbler capacities of men. It is almost an adage with some, when providing as they call it for their younger branches: "Any thing will do for a Parson." Awful proofs of awful times. As if the care of souls was of the smallest concern in the world. JESUS the SON of GOD, had different views. Paul his servant, esteemed it his highest honor. *I thank JESUS our LORD (said he) who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*. 1 Tim. i. 12. Yea, God himself hath honored the ministry, above all employments. For his only SON, the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and the express image of his Person; heir of all things, and by whom he made the worlds: Him he made a Minister.

By a minister of the *circumcision*, we are not to apprehend is meant, that CHRIST administered circumcision to any; though for the purpose of redeeming his Church from the curse of the law, he himself was circumcised, that he might become a debtor to fulfil the law, which he did. But I rather conceive, that the reason wherefore CHRIST is called a *minister of the circumcision*, is in a spiritual sense, and what Paul elsewhere calls: *we are the circumcision which worship GOD in spirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh*. Philip. iii. 3. CHRIST therefore is himself the minister of the circumcision: to shew, that both Jew and Gentile in him, are alike interested in the whole work of salvation. And indeed, the quotations which the Apostle makes from several Scriptures, seem to be intended to confirm this view of CHRIST. Psm. xviii. 49. Gen. xvii. 7. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5. Deuteronomy xxxii. 43. Psm. cxvii. 1.

I admire the gracious benediction with which the Apostle closeth this paragraph, for the consolation of the Church, in all ages. And, it is not only most blessedly timed, after what the Apostle had before said of the Gentiles, but also most sweetly worded, with an eye to CHRIST, whose well-known character is, that He is the *hope of Israel and SAVIOR thereof!* Jerem. xiv. 8. *The God of hope!* as if in direct opposition to those, *who having no hope, are without God*

in the world. Ephes. ii. 12. And there is a very great blessedness in the prayer, or invocation, on another account also; because the whole Three Persons of the GODHEAD are considered in it. For, as CHRIST is the hope of Israel, and the SAVIOR thereof: so, GOD the FATHER hath given the Church everlasting consolation, and a good hope, through grace. And all the aboundings of hope are the immediate work and agency of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Reader! shall not you and I put our hearty Amen, to this sweet, and affectionate prayer of the Apostle; and beg of GOD for the unceasing aboundings of all joy, and peace, in believing through GOD the HOLY GHOST?

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given me of God.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But, now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

I pass over the whole of *Paul's* account of himself, and of his proposed journey, for the sake of shortness. But I detain the Reader at this verse, to make a short observation on the assurance he had, that when he came to the Church, he should come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of CHRIST. It is very sweet and blessed to those who minister in holy things, when from the LORD's impression upon their own souls, they have strong faith, that the LORD will make their labors blessed to others also. *Paul* knew, that he had an interest in their prayers. And his own heart had been led out in prayer for them. And hence he drew the well-founded conclusion: I know and am sure that when I come unto you, *I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of CHRIST*. Reader! depend upon it, the same holds good in every age of the Church. When a faithful minister and servant of CHRIST, hath his soul frequently led out in prayer for the people, and the people are frequently led out in soul prayer for him; the LORD will bless, and doth bless, both minister and people. And the heart of the poorest minister is encouraged, when he knoweth that he there lives in the affections of the people; and that they are daily going to Court to remember him, and his poor

services, to the King. And the thought of this, that the people are at prayer for him, gives a lift to his soul when he hardly knows how to pray for himself. *Paul* knew that he should come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of **CHRIST** when he came to *Rome*, for his heart was there: and *God was his witness, that without ceasing, he was always making mention of them in his prayers.* Chap. i. 9, 10. And the **LORD** had bid him be of good cheer, for he must bear witness of Him at *Rome*. Acts xxiii. 11. It is truly blessed to be thus borne up on the wings of faith, and prayer, before the **LORD**!

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the **LORD** **JESUS CHRIST**'s sake, and for the love of the **SPIRIT**, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to **God** for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in *Judea*; and that my service which *I have* for *Jerusalem* may be accepted of the saints;

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of **God**, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the **God** of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

There is somewhat very sweet and gracious in this earnest appeal of *Paul* to the Church. He was closing up his Epistle, which contained in its bosom, more or less, all the great leading truths of the Gospel of **CHRIST**. He had shewn them, the momentous doctrines of the Church, in which he himself was established, and which he affectionately recommended to them. And now in the end, he leaves the whole impression upon their minds, under the grace of **God**, in this sweet form of words: *Now I beseech you brethren, for the **LORD** **JESUS CHRIST**'s sake, and for the love of the **SPIRIT**, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to **God** for me.* And he adds, that he seeks an interest in their prayers, to be delivered from the enemies of the truth, and to be made a blessing to the friends: and that coming to them by the will of **God**, both himself and them might be mutually refreshed. And he prays the **God** of peace to be with them all. Amen.

Every word in this address of the Apostle hath signification. It is *Paul*, the prisoner of **CHRIST** for the Gentiles, which thus beseecheth the Church. And though by his Apostolical authority, he might have commanded what he requests: yet he rather makes it the subject of entreaty. We behold him as on the knee of supplication appearing before them. And, to enforce what he entreated yet more, he adds the endearing name of *brethren*. Now I beseech you *brethren*. And not simply brethren in nature, but grace, not in the relationship of an earthly connection, which ends at death; but in the heavenly union in **CHRIST**, which continues to all eternity. And to crown all, he begs the favor he was seeking from them, in the name and *for the sake of the **LORD** **JESUS CHRIST**, and for the love of the **SPIRIT**.* How unanswerable the matter stood with **CHRIST**'s name to it; and when it was sought for, for his sake. He, who so loved the

Church as to give himself for it; and in whose sight, every individual member of his mystical body was alike dear. And as the love of the HOLY GHOST, became the grand cementing cause of all union, and all joy and peace in believing, whereby the brethren were made blessed in the enjoyment of GOD the FATHER's favor, and GOD the SON's grace; the Apostle brings this also into the account, as forming together the full assurance of divine mercy. Reader! do not overlook the affection of *Paul* for the Church; neither the earnestness of his labors for them. But yet more particularly mark, where the Apostle placed his great confidence, and from whence alone he looked for success. His services could only be blessed of GOD, and accepted of men, when he came to them by the will of GOD, and GOD refreshed them together. And the Apostle closeth in prayer, that the GOD of peace might be with them, in proof of it. *The GOD of peace*, is a comprehensive expression, to denote the Covenant of peace in CHRIST, in which all the Persons of the GODHEAD have concurred. And where this is, all other Covenant blessings follow. And the *Amen*, or verily, as one of the names of CHRIST, is added, as the signing, sealing, and delivery of deeds, to confirm the free-grace deed of GOD in CHRIST. *He that blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the GOD of truth*; that is, CHRIST, the Amen. Isaiah xv. 16. And the blessing in heaven, is confirmed in the same way, in the blessing of the Amen, *the faithful and true witness*, both in heaven and earth. Rev. iii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I seek for grace everlastingly to have in view the Person of JESUS. Nothing will tend to endear us more to our weaker brethren, and prompt us to be gentle and affectionate towards them, as when, under GOD the SPIRIT's glorifying CHRIST to our view, we behold his gentleness and meekness to his redeemed. In the days of our LORD's flesh, what reproaches he endured, and what unequalled grace and humility he manifested under all. Lamb of GOD! let a portion of thy meek SPIRIT be upon me, and upon all thy Church and people!

Almighty Author of thy Holy Scriptures, let the sweet savor of thy word be always uppermost in my heart. Let me never lose sight of thy love, thou gracious GOD the SPIRIT, in that thou hast caused whatsoever things were written aforetime, to be written for our learning. LORD! may I esteem thy word more than my necessary food! And do thou, O GOD of hope, fill my soul with all joy and peace in believing, that I may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.

And do thou, O glorious GOD and FATHER! who art the GOD of peace; and in proof of it didst bring again from the dead our LORD JESUS, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, be with all thy people and thy Churches always, to confirm them to the end. Yea, Almighty GOD! do thou establish them in thy truth, and make the blessed word of thy servants mutually refreshing, both to ministers and people. Amen.

C H A P. XVI.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter, which closeth the Epistle, is chiefly Greetings and Salutations to certain Persons of the Church, known to the Apostle. Paul closeth the whole with ascribing Praise and Glory to God.

I COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea :

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you ; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus :

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks : unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

I do not think it necessary, in a work of this kind, to amplify the pages, in dwelling upon the characters *Paul* hath here given testimony to, of their faith in CHRIST. Much no doubt might be said, of honor to them, and of profit to ourselves. But I must forego that pleasure. One point at the close of those verses, I would beg the Reader to notice, in order to guard against any misapprehension ; I mean, when speaking of some which were of note among the Apostles, he saith : *who also were in CHRIST before me.* By which we are to understand, that they were brought into a saving acquaintance with CHRIST before that *Paul* was. Nothing more can be implied than this. For as to the being in CHRIST, and the well-being in CHRIST, the whole Church were so together, and that before all worlds. *Known unto GOD are all his works, from the beginning of the world.* Acts xv. 18. It forms one of the most blessed of all truths, that the Church was *chosen in CHRIST before the foundation of the world.* Ephes. i. 4. And, from that moment in eternity, be that moment called by whatsoever name it may, in which to the infinite mind of JEHOVAH CHRIST stood up, as the Head, and Husband of his Church ; every individual member of his mystical body, as the body

and spouse of CHRIST, must have stood up with him. So that, in the secret decree, fore-knowledge, and fore-appointment of God, all CHRIST's members were alike in CHRIST together; as his seed, his children, his offspring. Prov. viii. 22—31. All alike at one time given by the FATHER. All alike covenanted for, and engaged for, by GOD the SON. And all equally beloved in CHRIST by GOD the SPIRIT, from the beginning; though his great work of regeneration, remained to be accomplished, in the several ages of the Church, as appointed. The being in CHRIST therefore before *Paul*, was in allusion to the time of this glorious act of regeneration wrought in their being quickened who were before in the *Adam*-nature of a fallen state dead in trespasses and sins. And in this sense, it was a blessed thing to be early called; and to be brought from darkness and the shadow of death. Thousands of transgressions are thereby cut short. And *Paul* was ready to give them the birth-right of honor. No doubt it melted his heart to consider, how the LORD had distinguished them with this sweet grace of conversion, when he was blaspheming and causing the LORD to serve with his sins, and wearying him with his iniquities. All this was cause for blessing the LORD for his distinguishing mercy. But, in relation to an union with CHRIST, and being in CHRIST, here there could be no precedency. The first sinner awakened by grace, whether *Adam*, *Eve*, or *Abel*; and the last sinner of the *Adam* race, which is yet unborn in nature, and consequently unborn in grace; were all alike secretly in CHRIST, chosen in CHRIST, beloved in CHRIST, and interested in all that belongs to CHRIST, as the CHRIST of God, and Head of his body the Church, from the beginning, and before all worlds.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his

sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

I stop the Reader at this last verse of the paragraph, just to remark a few words, in relation to an holy kiss. It was the custom in those eastern countries, for friends and relations to salute one another with various outward marks of affection. The *Abba Father* was never used by slaves to the *Ab*, or Head of the family. This privilege belonged only to children. In like manner the kiss, was a general token of love and reverence, or of equality. The brethren of CHRIST, his Church, his people, had their love-tokens also to manifest their affection, and attachment to each other. But *Paul*, taught by the HOLY GHOST, instructs the Church, to shew their love, not simply by a kiss, but an *holy* kiss. Perhaps recollecting the *traitorous* kiss of *Judas*. And also to distinguish it from any thing savoring of a want of chastity. The holy followers of the HOLY JESUS are in every thing to be distinguished from the carnal and ungodly. And if they do in their salutations, use the kiss of brotherly affection, it must be holy, and with an eye to the holy child JESUS!

17 Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

What a refreshment hath this promise been found to thousands! *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* Let the Reader observe the sweetness of it, and the certainty of it. Satan is a subtle foe, a powerful foe, an everlasting foe. But the promise is absolute; he shall be bruised under the feet of the LORD'S people shortly. He is come down with great wrath among the inhabitants of the earth, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. Rev. xii. 12. But how is he to be conquered, and brought under our feet? The promise doth not give the least encouragement, that any of God's redeemed shall subdue him, in any strength of their own.

Alas! the strongest of God's people, are but as feathers, if left to themselves, to the wind of Satan's temptations. But, the great blessedness of the promise is, that the God of peace will do it. And there is another precious part in this promise: when the God of peace bruise Satan, it shall be *under our feet*. Sweet consideration! Though you, and I, have nothing to do in the work; yet we have all the blessedness, in the victory. Our God will bruise him, and bring him down; but it shall be under our feet. As *Joshua* said to the men of war, which went with him to the holy war: *Come ye near, and put your feet upon the necks of your enemies*: So our Almighty *Joshua* will do by all that war with him, when he brings *Satan* under their feet. *Joshua* x. 24, 25. And though the child of God, when harassed with temptations, thinks it a long season, and frequently groans under the exercise, saying: how long shall mine enemy afflict me? yet the Lord saith, *shortly* he will bruise *Satan* under our feet. The Lord doth by his people now, as he did by his people of old, in driving out their enemies before them from *Canaan*. *The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little. Thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field encrease upon thee. But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.* Deut. vii. 22, 23. If the Lord were to destroy Satan at once, and if no foes from within, nor temptations from without, were to exercise the people of God; the beasts of the field in a man's own heart, namely, Spiritual pride, and Pharisaical righteousness, would increase upon him, and be more deadly in evil, than all the other devices of *Satan*. The Lord keeps his people humble therefore, by continually letting them see, and feel, the plague of their own heart. And *Satan*, for this purpose, is not wholly destroyed as yet. Neither at length shall the people of God have any hand in his destruction. This is our *Jesus's* work, and our *Jesus's* sole glory. It is the Lord thy God which shall drive all out, and consume all our foes with a mighty destruction, until they are destroyed. Reader! do not, no, not for a moment, lose sight of this sweet promise. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!*

21 *Timotheus* my workfellow, and *Lucius*, and *Jason*, and *Sosipater*, my kinsmen, salute you.

22 I *Tertius*, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 *Gaius* mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. *Erastus* the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and *Quartus* a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ* be with you all. Amen.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of *Jesus Christ*, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith :

27 To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Written to the Romans from Corinthus, *and sent* by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea.

Reader! do not overlook, how blessedly the Apostle dwells upon the precious words: *the grace of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST! He repeats it, as if it could not be mentioned (and which it never can) too often. And it is to the same purport, when he folds up the last leaf, in the cover of this blessed Epistle, and saith: *To God only wise*; or as *Jude* (for it is to one and the same Person the address is) renders it: *To the only wise* GOD our SAVIOR! Reader! what think you of these precious, precious things? Who can this only wise GOD, and GOD our SAVIOR be, but He, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?* Coloss. ii. 3. Is he not all along revealed, as the visible JEHOVAH? Is it not said: *No man hath seen God at any time.* But, it is immediately added: *the only begotten SON which is in the bosom of the FATHER; he hath declared him.* John i. 18. He then it is, that hath come forth from the invisibility of JEHOVAH, to make him visible to the Church; in and through the medium of our nature. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.* Coloss. ii. 9. Is he not then the only wise GOD, which both *Paul* and *Jude* here alluded to? Not to the exclusion of the Persons of the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, but in common with both, and the visible representation of the whole three Persons. And, Reader! I pray you to turn to the Epistle of *Jude*, and read attentively the whole; and then say, whether all along through the whole of it, the Apostle is not principally speaking of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? He is said to present to himself, the Church as faultless before him. So *Paul* saith, Ephes. v. 23. Philip. iii. 20. Titus ii. 13. And *Peter* to the same amount. 2 Pet. i. 1. Neither is this act of presentation at the last day ever spoken of in the Scripture, as the act of GOD the FATHER, or of GOD the HOLY GHOST! Can any thing more clearly define the Person, and Office-work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Hail thou GOD only wise! FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! be glory ascribed to thee through the mediation of the God-Man JESUS CHRIST for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

MAY the faithful Ministers of CHRIST here learn from *Paul*, how near, and dear, to the heart, must ever lie the Church of CHRIST, when the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in the heart. Not content with

addressing the whole mystical body of CHRIST, the Apostle here particularly mentions one by one, in name, as members of CHRIST's body, his flesh, and his bones. Oh! how infinitely more to be valued is this record of CHRIST's people in the book of GOD, than the being enrolled among all the great ones of the earth.

Reader! do not overlook what *Paul* hath said, in honorable testimony of those, who by awakening, and regenerating grace, were in CHRIST before him. How sweet is early grace! How blessed to know the LORD from our youth! Little children! if peradventure the LORD should, put this *Poor Man's Commentary* in the way of any such, who like *Josiah*, or *Timothy*, have been brought acquainted with the LORD GOD of your fathers from your youth; do not fail to mark and bless GOD for the distinguishing grace! And you no less of riper years, who even like *Paul*, can observe those that were in the knowledge of CHRIST before you; yea, if even at the eleventh hour! Oh! bless GOD for his distinguishing mercy. He that came in at the eleventh hour, was made equal with him which had borne the burden and heat of the day! And why so, but because it is all of free grace. He that is called early, is not called for his deservings. And he that is called late, is called then for GOD's grace, and not his merit. All is *to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

And now, for the moment, we take leave of the Apostle. Farewell *Paul*! We have cause to thank thee for thy ministry. But we bless *Paul's* LORD infinitely more, who appointed it. Oh! for grace, rightly to value and love the servant; but to pass by the servant, and love and adore the Master. Precious JESUS! he is indeed thy minister. Oh! make those sweet writings blessed to the souls of thy people. And may thy minister in thine Almighty hand, to all the Churches, to bring glory to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, now, and for ever. Amen.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL
TO THE
CORINTHIANS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE city of *Corinth*, which formed a part of *Greece*, in the province of *Achaia*, was a place of great opulence. And from its situation on an isthmus, or neck of land to the sea, opened a large source for trade and commerce; and, as