


SERMON V.



ON THE APPEARANCE AND MANIFESTATION OF
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO MOSES, AT THE
BURNING BUSH AT HOREB.



EXODUS iii. 15.

“ And God said, moreover, unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you : this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations.”

IT is truly pleasing, and exceedingly satisfactory and profitable to a spiritual mind, to view and trace out the several revelations, visions, and declarations, which the holy and essential undivided Three, in the One incomprehensible Jehovah, were most graciously pleased, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to vouchsafe to make of their distinctive personalities, and their oneness of essence, with their covenant transac-

tions on the behalf of the elect, the ancient patriarchs: and also to review the peculiar displays of their grace and mercy, in the renewal and various repetitions of the revelation and promise of the most holy or Anointed One, the Messiah. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were declared by the Lord to be the progenitors of him, the blessed One, the Purifier. Jacob, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, expressly confined the promise of him to Judah, of whose tribe Shiloh was to proceed. From hence, that tribe was considered as the kingly one, from which their kings were to be chosen, and king Messiah was to be of it.

I will go over the former revelations of Christ, to this before us, to Moses. They began with these words, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. iii. 15. This sentence was pronounced by the Lord God Jehovah, which is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature, belongs to our Jesus. He was Jehovah in an especial manner, for in him were united Jah, the essence, and Hovah, the powers and faculties of the human soul in perfection. In a peculiar manner the work of salvation belonged to him, he having engaged in the everlasting covenant, which obtained before all worlds between the Three in the

136 *On the Appearance of Christ to Moses.*

self-existing essence, to become incarnate, and to make his soul an offering for sin. His death was set forth in the institution of, and killing and offering sacrifices, immediately upon the revelation of him, as the seed of the woman, and the serpent bruiser. And to all this was added, that grand hieroglyphic, the similitude of the great ones, in the cherubim placed at the east of the garden of Eden. These figures seem to have been placed at the entrance of paradise, so that Adam could have no access thither but by them, for the space of one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years. This was the whole revelation made of the covenant of the eternal Three, of the incarnation and one sacrifice of Christ Jesus to the antediluvian patriarchs, and the sole foundation of all their faith and hope.

Noah entered into the ark at God's command, having his mind truly and divinely possessed with the knowledge of these important and divine truths and mysteries; and when he came out of the ark, after the deluge, he fully proved it by offering a burnt-offering unto the Lord, which Jehovah testified his acceptance of. Gen. viii. 21. Thus the world, renewed by the same agency by which it was formed, viz. the created spirit, air in motion, in union with the light and fire, Gen. i. 2. in which we may contemplate the new creation of the soul, which is by the uncreated spirit, the Holy Ghost, in union with the Father and the

Son, see Titus iii. 4 to 6. was begun and entered upon with a solemn memorial of the death of Christ, and Jehovah testified his own acceptance and delight in the savor thereof. He appointed the rainbow as a symbol of the Purifier; renewed the promise concerning the woman's seed, who was to destroy satan, who had shed the blood of man; and prohibited the eating blood, to point out the atonement which was to be made for sin, by the most precious blood-shedding of Immanuel. Thus the same knowledge of the Three in Jehovah, of their covenant offices, of the everlasting efficacious oblation of the Lord Jesus Christ was as truly professed by Noah after the flood as it was before. He expressly pronounces Shem to be the progenitor of the Messiah; saying, "Blessed be Shem of the Lord his God," or "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," Gen. ix. 26. And the line of election ran from him down to Abraham, unto whom the Lord expressly said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xiii. 3. As the cherubim was known to Noah, it is probable he might have a sacred copy or figure of it in the ark, and make use of it after he came out of it. A learned man says, the form of the cherubim was the same with that set up by the Lord God downwards, even in private families; and that at the dispersion at Babel, the heathens who carried them off, supposed the essence of their

Alehim dwelt in these figures, and therefore sought responses from them : they thought their gods ought to dwell in a body, which shews they had received an account of the incarnation of the Son of God, though they had corrupted it. Of this the tabernacle and temple was a shadow to true believers; but in Christ dwelleth the whole fulness of the Godhead bodily. It is conceived by Romaine, Parkhurst, and others, that the figures of the cherubim were preserved in the families of the faithful, that they sought the Lord by them, and that they presented themselves, and expected to receive an intimation of Jehovah's mind and will, by an audible voice pronounced by him from these figures; and certain it is, that from those set up in the most holy place in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, in the holy of holies, Jehovah was pleased to admit Moses and the high priest of the Jewish church to consult him.

As Jehovah singled out Abram in the line of Shem, and limited the promise of the Messiah to him and his seed, so this promise was variously expressed. It ran thus at first, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The next expression of it was, that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." And when Isaac was born, and in him the Lord had given Abraham a typical view and representation of his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, the very Lamb of God,

he again renewed the promise thus, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Isaac, Abraham's son, has the same promise of Messiah renewed to him; he entailed the same on Jacob, and at Bethel the eternal Three met him, gave him a visible symbol of their presence with him, and confirmed his faith in the full assurance that the Purifier would proceed from him in his descendants. A learned man says, Jacob set up the figure of the cherubim at Luz, and lay down to consult the Most High by dream, and the visionary ladder may well be conceived as bearing some likeness to the light and glory which shone forth in the primary cherub set up at Eden. Jacob, under the prophetic influence of the Holy Ghost, confined the promise of the Messiah to the tribe of Judah. According to what the Lord had declared to Abraham concerning the affliction of his posterity, so it came to pass. Jacob, in consequence of a famine in Canaan, goes down into Egypt, where his son Joseph was viceroy. It was now a period of two hundred and fifteen years since Abraham had been called, and received the promise of a numerous seed; yet so slow was the fulfilment of the promise, and the increase of the church during this term, that Abraham's seed were but seventy souls; but such was the faithfulness of God to his promise, that in two hundred and fifteen years more they were multiplied to six hun-

dred thousand men, besides women and children. Exod. xii. 37. and Numb. i. 46. Jacob died in Egypt, and was carried out of it into Canaan, and buried with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, and Leah, at Machpelah. This was a solemn testification of their faith in the promise that their posterity should inherit the land of Canaan ; and also of their own belief of their interest and part in the resurrection of the just.

The twelve sons of Jacob, who were heads of twelve distinct tribes, to whom the promise of Christ belonged, though but one of them could have the honor of producing him, returned into Egypt after they had buried their father, and remained there with their posterity. Joseph seems to have been the first of them who was removed out of the world by death. From the renewal of the world after the waters of the deluge, to the death of Joseph, was seven hundred and thirteen years. It was from the creation of the world two thousand three hundred and sixty-nine years. Levi, Jacob's third son, was the next who died after Joseph, who was one hundred and ten years old, and Levi one hundred and thirty-seven.

When all the patriarchs were fallen asleep by death, their seed fell into idolatry, and neglected circumcision, which the Lord visited for, by permitting a new king of Egypt most grievously to afflict them, by a most severe edict, commanding

them to drown all their male children immediately on their birth. Moses was born, in the year of the world, according to Ainsworth, two thousand four hundred and thirty-two; he was the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, in the seventh generation, as Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. A divine beauty appeared in his form at his birth, so that his parents secreted him from being destroyed by those who, according to the orders of the king of Egypt, were to search out and destroy all the male children born to the Israelites. When his parents could no longer hide him in their own house with safety, an ark of bulrushes, which was daubed with slime and pitch, to keep out the water, was prepared, and in it the infant was put, and it was placed among flags or rushes on the brink of the river Nile. Pharaoh's daughter was the instrument of preserving his life: she gave him the name Moses, because, said she, "I drew him out of the waters;" his own mother nursed him, after which he was brought up in Pharaoh's court, where he lived forty years, and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and in deed. From the death of Jacob to the death of Joseph, was fifty-three years; and from the death of Joseph in Egypt, to the birth of Moses, was seventy-five years.

Now as Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt, and gave doubtless a very particular account of the original promise of the Messiah, that he was to be the seed and son of Abraham; and that it had also, with all contained in the promise of the land of Canaan, and a numerous seed, been expressly delivered to his father Isaac, who had conferred these promises to him, all which the Lord himself had repeated, and applied to him, and he was full of joy at the prospect of it on his death bed, and spoke most fully and clearly of Christ: so this was well known to the twelve patriarchs. Joseph, therefore, when he died, expressed his full belief of it, saying, "Lo, I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob;" and commanded that his bones should be carried into the land of Canaan. And Stephen tells us, Acts vii. 15, 16. that all the rest of the patriarchs were removed after their death, and buried in Sychem, in the land of promise, which evidently proves that they were believers in Jesus, that they died in him, and to shew how firmly they believed the accomplishment of the promise of their seed inheriting it in due season, and also their earnest desire to partake in the benefit of Christ's resurrection, they were anxious to be interred in Canaan. These things were kept in remembrance by the church which they left behind,

who had full proof of God's faithfulness to his promise concerning making them very fruitful and numerous. This they saw evidently to be the case. And as Moses had his own mother for his nurse, she and her partner being both believers in Christ Jesus, doubtless found means, as their son grew up, to inform him of his relation to them, of his being an Israelite, of the glory and honor which belonged to them, and that the Messiah, in whom all nations were to be blessed, was to come of them; and the scriptures give us warrant to conceive all this to be the case, for the apostle, speaking of Moses, says, "By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. xi. 24—26. And in the chapter before this, out of which I have selected my text, we are informed, that seeing an Hebrew, one of his brethren, insulted by an Egyptian, he took part with the Israelite, and slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand; he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not, which appeared when the next day two of them striving with each other, he endea-

144 *On the Appearance of Christ to Moses.*

vored to reconcile them, but they were so far from accepting his mediation, that one of them reproached him with the death of the Egyptian the day before. This put him upon leaving Egypt, where he had lived forty years, and he fled into the land of Midian, where he married, begat two sons, and lived there also the term of forty years. Now it is very easy to conceive, that he was well acquainted with the several manifestations of the co-equal and co-eternal Three to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that he knew the covenant of the Trinity, and rested thereon for his eternal salvation; and that he well knew the time for the deliverance of the Lord's people drew nigh.

The church in Egypt was now sorely persecuted and distressed; it looks as though their bondage began a little before his birth, and it had lasted now fourscore years. The name of the king under whom it began, is thought to be Orus II. the Busirus of the Grecians. He was the bloody tyrant who commanded the male children of Israel to be slain. When Moses had been an exile forty years, this king, who oppressed the Israelites, and all those who sought the life of Moses died; yet though the king was dead, their bondage ceased not, so that they sighed and groaned exceedingly under it, and the Lord had respect unto them, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. He had assured Abraham, that although

his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and be evil dealt with and afflicted four hundred years, yet "that nation whom they shall serve will I judge," saith God, "and afterwards shall they come out with great substance," Gen. xv. 13, 14. And the Lord being about to fulfil these promises, which he had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their posterity, is said to remember his covenant with them; it is added, "God looked on the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them;" this was a time of sore trial and persecution, sorrow and suffering to the church of Christ. It led real saints to some solemn views of the state and sufferings of the Messiah, previous to his glorious discharge and victory out of the sorrows which would invade his soul, when he should pay the debts of all his people. Dr. Lightfoot says the 88th and 89th psalms were written at this time, and affirms them to be the most ancient writings in the world. The one expressing the soul-sorrows of the Lord Jesus, when all the sins of his people met on him, and he was surrounded with the whole storm of divine wrath: and the other is a solemn record of the covenant between the Father and the Son. Heman, the Ezrahite, wrote the 88th, and Ethan, the Ezrahite, wrote the 89th; they were both of them the sons of Zerah, the son of Judah. See 1 Chron. ii. 4, 6.

If Moses wrote the book of Genesis in the land of Midian, whilst he kept the sheep which belonged to his father-in-law, he must have had a most clear and full understanding of the revelation which the Lord God had been pleased to make from the fall, down all through the patriarchal age, and must have been well and thoroughly acquainted with all the appearances, visions, promises, and declarations made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is generally conceived that he wrote the book of Job in Midian; and if he did not begin the pentateuch there, yet he could not fail of being well acquainted with the most important events and promises recorded therein, which doubtless were handed down to him, and kept up in the minds of the truly godly in that age, by oral tradition, seeing their lives were then long enough to preserve the memory of every remarkable vision and promise, which had been made and given.

This chapter before us, out of which I have read my text, contains an account of Moses's keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, who was prince, or priest, of Midian. And at Horeb he was favored with an appearance of the Angel Jehovah, who spake to him out of the midst of a burning bush, and proposeth to send him to Egypt, to deliver the people of Israel, and to bring them into the land promised to their

fathers. Moses is reluctant to go on this errand, and asks the name of God, by which he shall deliver his message to the people; to which God replies, "I AM THAT I AM," and sends him to declare to the children of Israel, saying, "I AM hath sent me unto you;" to this the message to the king of Egypt is added, with an account that he would refuse to comply with it, and also how Jehovah would make bare his glorious arm and crush the Egyptians, and deliver his people. This is the subject and substance of it; and I will begin with the preliminary verses to my text, that I may properly introduce it, and then conclude with my text, opening and explaining the subject of which it treats.

Verse 1. "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." Jethro seems to have been a real believer in the covenant engagements of the eternal Three; one who worshipped God by offering sacrifices according to the divine revelations, institution, and command for so doing; and though he lived out of the land of Canaan, yet he rejoiced in the goodness which the Lord bestowed on Israel. See Exod. xviii. 10, 11. Moses was a shepherd, a type of Christ, and of his office. Jacob and Joseph were shepherds, and both types of Christ.

The whole history of the sufferings, deliverance, and advancement of Joseph, seems calculated not only to be symbolical and figurative of Christ Jesus, but also suited to represent the state of the church and people of God in Egypt, and also their deliverance therefrom. Midian bordered on the land of Canaan, and was near mount Horeb, which is here called the mountain of God by anticipation. It was a hill with two tops, one of which was called Horeb, from its being dry and without water, and the other top was called Sinai, because of the bramble bushes which grew thereon; it was but three days journey from Egypt. Jethro seems to have been the son and successor of Reul, whose daughter Moses married. Moses had been now forty years in Midian, where he was exceedingly changed in his state and studies: in Egypt he was a courtier and philosopher; here he is a student of divinity, and of God himself, says Dr. Lightfoot, who adds, that this country had first been planted by Cush, the son of Ham; therefore Aaron and Miriam call Moses's wife a Cushite. Numb. xii. 1. And Zerah, the Arabian, is so called, 2 Chron. xiv. But Abraham, by the conquest of Chederlaomer, and the other kings with him, had obtained it for his own, and thither he sent the concubines sons, so that these were the sons of Keturah, and received the true know-

ledge of God from their father Abraham, which seems to have been carefully preserved by Reul, Jethro, and Hobab.

Verse 2. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." This was a vision of Christ, the Angel Jehovah, in a bush appearing in fire, as he had done when he made the promise to Abraham. Gen. xv. 17, 18. When Jehovah confirmed the covenant to him, a fire like that of a furnace, passed through the divided pieces of the sacrifice, and consumed them. And thus, when the Lord is about to fulfil his covenant, by delivering his people from Egypt, his appearance to Moses in the bush was fire. The bramble bush may be considered as a figure of the church in its afflicted state in Egypt; yet Christ was with it, dwelt in it, so that it was not consumed: its afflictions were great, but the Lord's mercies were greater; and the Son of God appearing in the bush, in a flame of fire, was expressive of his incomprehensible deity, majesty, and glory.

Verse 3. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." Moses was filled with wonder at this visionary appearance, and was disposed to consider it, and drew near it with that intent.

150 *On the Appearance of Christ to Moses.*

Verse 4. "And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses; and he said, here am I." As the sight of the bramble bush burning with fire, yet unconsumed, struck Moses with surprize, and engaged his attention, so the voice of God, who spoke to him out of the midst of the bush, and called him by his name twice, must doubtless be matter of holy astonishment to his mind. He made a reply to it, saying, "Here am I."

Verse 5. "And he said, draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." This was to check all vain curiosity, to shew he was now to resign himself up wholly to God and his service, that this very place was now sanctified by the presence and vision of God; and he was to put off his shoes from his feet, as a sign and expression of it.

Verse 6. "Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." To draw forth and encourage the faith of Moses, the angel of the uncreated essence, saith to him, "I am the God of thy father," and adds, "the God of Abraham," to whom the land of Canaan was first promised, Gen. xii. 17. the affliction of

his seed in Egypt prophesied, and the deliverance from it now to be performed. Our Lord Jesus Christ proves from these words, the resurrection of the dead; and that Abraham lived unto God though his body was under the power of death. Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Moses hid his face, or as Stephen expresses it, “trembled, and durst not behold, because of the glory of the Lord,” which at this time was so conspicuous.

Verse 7. “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows.” Here is a clear and full proof given of the Lord’s attention to the case of his church in affliction and distress; he is mindful of his relation to his saints; he calls them, “My people;” his ear is open to their cry at all times, and more especially when they are in distress; he takes a particular view of their sorrows; and he will deliver them in his own appointed time, and by his own power, raising up instruments, and making use of them as seemeth meet to him.

Verse 8. “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” Thus

154 *On the Appearance of Christ to Moses.*

the Lord Jesus, the Angel Jehovah, declares the purposes of his will, and the end of his vision and appearance at this time, in the burning bush. It was his pleasure to deliver his church, and bring his people out of Egypt: he would, according to his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, bring them into the land of Canaan, the goodness of which he sets forth, to encourage them; and the present inhabitants he mentions, to fortify their minds against any fears which might arise, and suggest that they were sinners devoted to destruction.

Verse 9. "Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppressions wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." Which shews how the Lord hears the cry of his people, and what particular notice he takes of their oppression, and how he will most surely deliver them in his own good time and way.

Verse 10. "Come now, therefore, I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Thus the Lord calls and commissions Moses to be their deliverer, and authorizes him to go unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, on this important business and design; but Moses is weak where he should be strong, and diffident where he should be confident, as appears in what follows.

Verse 11. “ And Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Moses looks too much at himself, and too little at Christ, who had called him, and would furnish him with every necessary qualification, and make bare his holy arm, and accomplish the great and glorious deliverance of his people from Egypt.

Verse 12. “ And he said, certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.” This was a most confirming promise, most exactly suited to the case, to which the token added, was to strengthen Moses’s faith. This mount Horeb was to be the seat of God’s worship; on it Jehovah had now descended, and called it holy ground; on it he would again descend, and deliver the law out of the midst of devouring fire. Here the tabernacle was made, and sacrifices offered unto God. On these accounts it was called the mountain of God. The free converse between Christ and Moses, shews the great condescension of the Most High God to his beloved, who are in themselves less than the least of all his mercies.

Verse 13. “ And Moses said unto God, behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath

sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, what is his name? what shall I say unto them?" Moses knew the eternal Three in the One Jehovah to be the covenant God of his church and people; and the question which he here puts forth, does not imply any kind of ignorance in this most important point; but this appearance of Jehovah's in the burning bush being singular, he wants to know what name it would please the Lord to express himself by, and by which he should deliver his message, so as to gain the attention of the Israelites, and gain their credit to what he was to relate unto them.

Verse 14. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Thus the Lord gives a reply to Moses, saying, "I AM THAT I AM;" which, says Ainsworth, implies God's eternal being in himself: he existing by a necessity of nature, immutably one and the same, in all ages, and throughout all generations, before whom all creation is as nothing, he is constant in the performance of his word and promises, he is now and for ever that which he was before to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Our most blessed Lord solemnly claims to himself what is intended in this divine name, John, viii. 5, 8. "Before Abraham was I AM;" not *I was*, but *I am*, plainly

intimating his divine eternal existence; and the jews appear to have well understood him, for then took they up stones to cast at him, as a blasphemer. I am that I am, or, I will be what I will be, is equivalent to Jehovah the Alehim, or God of Israel, in the following verse, which is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable essence of God, and which the apostle John opens and expresses thus, "Which is, and which was, and which is to come." Rev. i. 4. And thus I am brought to the words of my text;

Verse 15. Which reads thus, "And God said, moreover, unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations." In my opening and explaining the subject of which these words treat, I will endeavor to set the same before you in the following manner.

First, the relation which subsists between the Lord God and his people, and how he sends his message to them by Moses, declaring himself to them, to be the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Secondly, his mindfulness of his promise to them, and of his being about to fulfil and most

graciously perform it to the Israelites, their seed and offspring. And,

Thirdly, the Lord glories in his covenant relation to these fathers and patriarchs, saying, "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations."

I am, first, to open and explain the relation which subsists between the Lord God and his people, and how he sends his message to them by Moses, declaring himself to them to be the Lord God of their fathers, &c. "And God said, moreover, unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations." With regard to the union, relation, and interest, which subsists between the Lord God and his people, it is entirely founded on the sovereign will and good pleasure of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who having loved the elect with an everlasting love, have, by their mutual acts and transactions in the everlasting council and covenant, been pleased to take them into covenant union and relation with them, and are pleased to stand in this relation to them, as Jehovah their covenant God. Bound by the obligation of a covenant which obtained amongst them before all worlds, to save them with an everlasting salvation, and to bless them with an

everlasting blessing. This was to be realized and set forth in the incarnation of the Second Person in the essence, whose life and death was to contain the whole salvation of God, with all the blessings and benefits of eternal redemption from sin, the world, satan, death, and hell. He being a partaker of flesh and blood would be suitably disposed to feel for and sympathise with his church and people; his union, interest, and fellowship with them would hereby be most clearly proved. The cases and various circumstances that his church, from age to age, would be in, would serve to draw out his heart in love, and give proper occasion for the exercise of his mercy to his beloved people. And what befel them would, at particular seasons, serve as shadows to reflect on their minds what would befall him, their Head. As the co-equal Three in the One Jehovah, are the covenant God of the elect; so the Second in the essence, who at this time appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, and addressed him out of the bramble bush, speaks in the name and as the representative of each of the divine personalities, saying, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you." The declaration, "The Lord God of your fathers," is very expressive of the covenant relation between God and them, and also of his mindful-

ness of his various appearances to them, of the holy communion which he had held with them, and also of the promises which he had made unto them; so that these words were given forth to encourage faith and hope in the full and perfect accomplishment of them. The addition, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you," points out that in consequence of his revelation of the everlasting covenant of the Eternal Three unto them, he styles himself their God, the same who had appeared to Abraham, Gen. xviii. to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. and to Jacob, xxxi. and xxxii. and whom he calls both God and an angel, Gen. xlviii. and Hosea calls by the same titles, and adds, "The Lord is his memorial." Hosea xii. 2, 3, 4. The same appeared at this time to Moses. Jehovah says of Moses, Numb. xii. 8. "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." What can this similitude of Jehovah be but the angel of his presence, Isa. lxiii. 9. who was with Moses, at Horeb, who accompanied the people of Israel in the wilderness, and in whom was the name, *i. e.* the nature of Jehovah. Exod. xxiii. 21. Even the same angel who wrestled with Jacob in the form of a man, Gen. xxxii. 24—30. On which occasion Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, the face or presence of God, saying, "For I have

seen God face to face." And so Jehovah at this time spake to Moses face to face, as a man talketh with his friend.

It is most sweet and glorious to consider the Second Person in the essence, existing as acting in his office, character, and economy in the covenant, and revealing himself as the Head, the Purifier, the Redeemer, and Savior of his people. When we view him in the account given us in this chapter, as appearing on the behalf of his church, calling Moses to his office of being their typical savior, and hear him saying, I will be what I will be, God-man, the Head and Redeemer of my church, it is truly quickening to faith. The Angel Jehovah declaring himself to be the Lord God of their fathers, was in fact not only calling upon them to consider his past goodness and manifestations unto them; but it was also declaring that he would, to all spiritual ends and purposes, be the same to them. His mentioning their fathers by name, shewed how precious they were to him; and his declaring he was the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was to assure them he would fulfil all his covenant purposes and promises to them, both in time and eternity. His being their God, was the ground and foundation for their faith to exercise itself upon, and expect to receive all good from him, who is the fountain of essential

good. His being the Lord God of their fathers, was the reason why he would fulfil to them his holy promise of bringing them out of Egypt, and planting them in the land of Canaan.

I cannot close this head without requesting it may be remembered, that Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham, and was pleased to appear to Hagar, as the angel of life, who appeared to Isaac, and also to Jacob, when he was favored with a remarkable dream, in which he saw a visionary ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and who also was seen by him at Peniel, in the form of a man, whom he entitles God, and the angel which preserved him all his life long, was the same who spake to Moses at Horeb, and who led his people through the wilderness. And a true scriptural knowledge and belief of this would most powerfully increase our faith, and could not fail of endearing our most precious Lord Jesus Christ to our hearts. I proceed,

Sccondly, To consider the Lord's mindfulness of his promise to his people, and of his being about to fulfil and most gloriously to perform it to the Israelites, their seed, and offspring. "I am the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

As the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting immutably fixed upon his people, so his eternal purpose and gracious promise must

take place in them, and be fulfilled unto them. Abraham and his seed were singled out by the Lord for the Messiah to proceed from them. The circumstances the Israelites would be in before their departure from Egypt, had been shewn to their father Abraham, and the promise of their Exodus, with its precise time, had been delivered to him. This season was now drawing very near its close, therefore the Lord is pleased to appear to Moses, and gives him a commission to bring them forth, and sends him in his great name to this people, saying, "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and my memorial to all generations." No name, no title, no revelation, could better suit the case of the Israelites; it shewed what the Lord God was to them; how he remembered for them his holy covenant; how faithful he was to his promise; that his mind was engaged to do them good; and that he would most assuredly make them partakers of the benefit of being delivered out of their present state of persecution and distress, and bring them into the promised land. We see from hence that the covenant of the Lord is had by him in everlasting remembrance; that he is always mindful of his promise, and that he keepeth truth for ever: his mercy is to his people from generation to generation. How supporting to

164 *On the Appearance of Christ to Moses.*

faith must the Lord's message be, "I am the God of thy fathers:" consider what I was to them; what promises I made to them; how I revealed myself in my personalities, Godhead, and covenant offices to them; and how I am engaged by my faithfulness to fulfil my promises to you, their offspring. "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob:" from them the blessed seed, the Purifier, and Shiloh, is to proceed, and you are interested in all the blessings contained in these exceeding great and precious promises; I am the immutable Jehovah, and I will prove my immutability in all my designs concerning the salvation of my elect, in my fulfilling the promises already given to your ancestors, concerning your redemption from Egypt, and introduction into the land of Canaan. I am the same, as the God of all grace, to all my people, as I was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and will work and perform in them, and for them, the whole good counsel of my will. So that we may learn to improve what the Angel Jehovah here says of his being "the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," to our own spiritual advantage, and for our own consolation: the everlasting God, the Three in the One Jehovah are our's; the Father's love, the Son's salvation, and the Spirit's consolations belong to us; we stand before the Father as the objects of his immutable love, are accepted by him in the person of Christ, God-man;

we are clothed with the righteousness, and washed in the blood of the Lamb; we have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and are heirs of Christ, and joint heirs with fellow saints in all the promises which concern our bodies and souls in time and eternity. So that God's mindfulness of his promise here before us, and his declaration concerning the fulfilment of it to the Israelites, may serve as a pledge to our faith, and prove to us that he will remember our cases and his own promises which suit them, and will most faithfully fulfil them in us, and to us, in the way and at the time which will be most for his glory and our good. And this brings me,

Thirdly, to consider how the Lord glories in his covenant relation to these fathers and patriarchs, saying, "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations."

The persons of God's elect are precious in his sight; their persons are the objects of his everlasting love, he chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they are his portion, jewels, inheritance, and glory. These patriarchs were predestinated to be the progenitors of Christ, who was to come of them, after the flesh. They and their offspring were separated from all others on this account; the covenant between Jehovah and his anointed was made known to them; the Angel of Jehovah had often been seen by them; he had given them many sweet visits;

admitted them frequently into communion with himself; and remembered them with everlasting kindness. His union to them, his interest in them, his relation to their persons, was matter of delight to him. He, being Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, declares himself to them, with all the blessings of his love, to be their God and Father, their Friend and their Shepherd; "I am the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations;" which is as it were, expressing the infinite delight it gave the eternal Three, to contemplate their mutual transactions on the behalf of the elect, and the relation they stood in to them as their covenant God, whose will, covenant, word, and oath, gave full security for their everlasting salvation. We should learn from hence, believers, to consider that our state before God, in time and eternity, depends upon God's covenant; that his being the Lord our God is the greatest of all blessings, and contains every blessing we can possibly enjoy in earth or heaven. The Lord proclaims himself as standing in this relation to his church and people, he glories in it, saying, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God."

As the title of "The Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," was to express how the Lord had taken these persons into a covenant relation

to himself, and was himself related to them in a covenant relation, and took this title to shew what he was to them; so his being called in the new testament, the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is to point out that the covenant of grace was made with Jesus Christ, God-man, our head and hope: he is the Mediator of it; his blood is the seal of it; and through his finished righteousness and sacrifice, all the blessings of it will be communicated to us in earth and heaven.

May the Holy Ghost fix your minds on the appearance and manifestation of Christ to Moses, in a flame of fire, as the sent of Jehovah. And may you see such evidences in the scriptures which have at this time been opened and laid before you, of his being the very and essential Jehovah, and of his love to his church throughout all past ages and generations, as may lead you to worship him, with the Father, and the Spirit, the co-equal and co-eternal Three in One infinite Godhead, to whom be everlasting and undivided praise. Amen, and amen, and amen.