

SERMON VIII.

ON THE SINAI TRANSACTION AND COVENANT
BETWEEN THE LORD AND THE PEOPLE OF
ISRAEL, WITH THE GLORY, MAJESTY, AND
REGALIA OF SOVEREIGNTY, DISPLAYED BY
THE LORD GOD ON THAT MOST IMPORTANT
AND SOLEMN REVELATION OF HIS WILL TO
THE ISRAELITES.

EXODUS xix. 16, 17, 18.

“ And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp, to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”

THE Lord God brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness, and went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. He divided the waters of the Red Sea, and they passed safely through, whilst the Egyptians sank like lead in the mighty waters. The cloudy pillar, symbolical of the divine presence, was a guide to the Israelites in their journies: as it rested on Mount Sinai, in the tabernacle and temple, it was the visible and outward manifestation of the glory of the Lord. When they had passed through the sea on the twenty-first day of Nisan, or Abib, they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore, for which great act they sang the Lord's song, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. A very distinct view of their march after they came out of Egypt, may be pleasing, and I will quote it from Dr. Lightfoot: 'The cloud of glory was their conductor. On the fifteenth day of Nisan, even while it was yet night, they began their march, and went out in the sight of all Egypt, while they were burying their dead: this day they went from Rameses to Succoth; here they set off the sixteenth day of the month, and came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham. The Red Sea so pointed into this wilderness, that before they passed the Red Sea, they were in the wilderness of Etham; and when they had passed it, they are in it again. The wilderness

of Etham and Shur are one and the same: see Numbers xxxiii. 7, 8. compared with Exodus xv. 22. On the seventeenth day of Nisan they came to Pihahiroth; on the eighteenth day of the month, it was told Pharaoh that they fled; for till their third day's march they went right for Horeb, according as they had desired to go three days journey to sacrifice; but when they turned out of that way toward the Red Sea, then Pharaoh had intelligence that they intended to go to some place which they had not mentioned, or asked leave to visit; therefore he and his Egyptians prepare to pursue them. On the nineteenth day of the month, they set out on their pursuit; on the twentieth, towards evening, they overtake them encamping beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon; that same night they enter the sea, and by break of day were all marched through, and the Egyptians drowned; on the one and twentieth in the morning they came out of the sea. This was the last day of the holy passover week: they sang the Lord's song, and after three days march they came to Marah, and from thence to Elim.'

In the Lord's going before the Israelites, and guiding them through the Red Sea, and overwhelming their enemies, we have full proofs of the care of Christ, and his merciful kindness towards his church. The passage through the Red Sea, and their being baptized unto Moses

in the cloud and in the sea, were figurative of our open passage through the blood of Christ, in the Lord's good way; and also of the ordinance of baptism. The murmurings of the Israelites are very expressive of our's, which are various, and almost always. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians marching after them, they were sore afraid, and cried out unto the Lord; but it seems, by their address to Moses, and by what the psalmist says, Psalm cvi. 7. to be nothing but sinful complaining: he says, "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea."

Having passed safely through the sea, at Marah, a march of three days, they murmur for want of water, though three days before they had sung the high praises of God, for delivering them completely from the rage of the enemy: yet here the water being bitter, it was an occasion of their murmuring. Moses on this account cried unto the Lord, who shewed him a tree, which being cast into the waters, they became sweet. Here the Lord gave them an express ordinance or command to walk in, agreeable to his revealed will, proclaiming himself to be Jehovah, the physician and healer. The bitter water made sweet, may shew and remind us, how Christ and his presence with his people sweetens and sanctifies their greatest and most bitter afflictions: this

place was called Marah, *i. e.* bitterness, on account of the bitter waters.

This place was Shur, in the wilderness: from hence they removed by the direction of the cloud to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees, and they encamped there by the waters. Doubtless this situation must be very satisfactory to them; and it may serve to remind us of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whose doctrines are as refreshing to the spiritual Israel of God, as these twelve wells of water were to the Israelites; and also of the seventy disciples sent forth by Christ to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick, who, like palm-trees, were borne up, and looking heaven-ward, whose doctrine was green, full of verdure, and where received, caused such to walk in the Lord's ways uprightly. At Elim the children of Israel abode several days, and might, in the twelve wells of water, be reminded of the number of their tribes, and in the seventy palm trees, of the seventy souls of Israel that came into Egypt. From hence they removed to Sin or Zin; from thence to Dopkah, from thence to Alush, from thence to Rephidim.

In this wilderness they murmured for want of bread, and the Lord sent them quails and manna. Here the sabbath is first mentioned, though not first commanded; it is conceived that in Egypt they had neglected it, and since their coming

thence, they had marched on it. Now on giving the manna, a rule is given concerning its universal observation: by the Lord's command, a pot of manna is to be kept, as a memorial to future generations, that the Lord fed his people with miraculous bread in the wilderness: it was typical of Christ, the bread of life.

Their next removal was to Rephidim, where they murmur for want of water, and the Lord gave them water from a rock of flint. This was also figurative of Christ, the Rock of salvation, who being wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the waters of life flow forth to the refreshment of his church and people. Rephidim and Sinai are one; it is called Horeb and Sinai indifferently: it was a mountain with two tops, one of which bore the name of Sinai, the other of Horeb: so that the rock smitten was at the skirts of the hill from Horeb to Sinai. In a cleft of this rock Moses was, when the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful," &c. The people are scourged for their murmurings by Amalek's coming out against them, yet Amalek is conquered at Moses's prayer.

The people come to Sinai on the first day of the third month, called Sivan, it answers to a part of our May. On being encamped here, the Lord speaking out of the cloud of glory, called Moses up into the mount: this was the second

day after. they came here. On the third Moses went up into the mount, and relateth the people's answer to God. On the fourth and fifth days, Moses sanctifieth the people, and sets bounds to the mountain. On the sixth day of the month Sivan in the morning, the law was pronounced by Christ, fifty days after they came out of Egypt : on this festival after the ascension and coronation of Christ in heaven, the Holy Ghost, and the gift of tongues, were given to the apostles.

I will now introduce my text and subject, by viewing and commenting on the verses which go before, and lead unto my text : ver. 1. " In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai." Abib or Nisan was the first month, Jair or Zif was the second month, answering to April and May ; Sivan was the third month, it answered to May and June : ver. 2. " For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount ;" this was in Arabia. The cloud of glory in which Jehovah dwelt, who by it led and guided them in their marches, was on the mount ; and doubtless, also, spread over them, for their security and protection ; out of it Jehovah, the angel, who appeared to Moses in the bush, who led them

out of Egypt, who went before them as their conductor, spake to Moses, the shepherd of this chosen flock, and called him to come up into the mount, *i. e.* higher towards that top of it, called Sinai: ver. 3. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;" ver. 4. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself:" ver. 5. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people; for all the earth is mine:" ver. 6. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Thus the angel Jehovah, who was visibly present in this symbol of his presence, with Moses on the mount, spake with an audible voice to his servant Moses; and as the cloud now rested on the mount, the people had all the evidence they could of the Lord's being about to display his further glory amongst them; and what is contained in these four verses, is as I may say, the Lord's preface to what he was at this time going to deliver unto them.

It was now the day which immediately followed their coming hither; and we will make the following observations on them, as they may lead

us into an acquaintance with what is expressed by the Lord in them. The people being come hither, the Lord prepares them to receive from him a body of laws, moral, judicial, and ceremonial. He was about to form them into a church state, to prove himself their king, by giving forth his mind and will, in his commands and precepts: they were to be a peculiar treasure to him, a kingdom of priests, an holy nation; and as such, they were to be separated unto the Lord, and devoted to his service and worship: their observance of the moral, judicial, and ceremonial law, would keep them a distinct body of people from all others.

The Israelitish commonwealth and polity were now to be settled: the whole was of divine appointment, framed after the shadow and example of things spiritual and heavenly. The ground and foundation of all delivered by the Lord, in this solemn transaction at Sinai, proves that the ancient patriarchs, priests, and kings, of the jews, were typical persons and offices; and that the more remarkable passages of their lives, and the extraordinary endowments of their minds, were to express and foreshew him, who was to arise as the head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. The psalmist celebrates the grace here uttered by the Lord to Moses, in Psalm cxxxv. 4. "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel

for his peculiar treasure." Jehovah selected them from all others to be his church, to receive the law and the promises, to have his presence residing in the midst of them, and to be the guardians of his true faith and worship. Thus the Israelites were, by the Lord's own act of designation, a kingdom of priests, a peculiar treasure, an holy nation to the Lord; all which, even in the external privileges, were out of royal favor; so says Moses, "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord, thy God, hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love on you, and choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharoah, king of Egypt," Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8.

Moses and the people had now a fresh fulfilment of God's promise to them, which might serve to confirm their faith; the Lord said to Moses, when he appeared to him in the bush, "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," Exod. iiii. 12. which was now ful-

filled ; and also what he further declared, " And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians," Exod. vi. 7. This was now accomplished ; and the Lord reminds them of it in the fourth and fifth verses of the chapter before us. Moses informed the elders, as the representatives of the people, of all these words which the Lord commanded him ; the whole body of the people with one accord reply, " All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Moses returns with their reply to God, who informs Moses that he would display his glorious majesty, so as they should hear his voice, and believe Moses for ever to be sent by him unto them, " Lo ! I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever." This, Moses made the people also acquainted with ; after which the Lord commands him to go unto the people, and prepare them for a solemn approach unto God : they were to be sanctified, by separating themselves from all defilement, washing their clothes, and be ready against the third day, which was just fifty days from their departure from Egypt ; on it the Lord said he would come down, in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai : this was in a cloud, out of which he was to speak, and so display his glory, majesty, and regalia of

sovereignty, as would prove him to be the Lord God omnipotent.

The Lord commands Moses that bounds be set to that part of the mount, on which he would make this appearance, that the people should be strictly charged not to come near, or touch it; that care be taken to drive the cattle from it; because the least touching it, whether by beast, or man, should be certain death; and a token is given when the people should draw nigh: "When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount." Moses having received these orders from Jehovah, went down from the mount unto the people, and prepared them for this most near and solemn approach to God. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled: and Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount; and mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mount quaked greatly."

In these words we have an account of one of the greatest revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his glory, majesty, godhead, sovereignty, and

holiness, which he was pleased to make of himself to the people of Israel. To open and explain it will require the divine light and teaching of the Holy Ghost, to give each part its due place and weight, that the emphasis of it may rest on our minds shall be my study. For clear perception of every part of the text, I will cast it into the following order and division.

First. I will consider the solemn apparatus, with which this display of the glory, majesty, godhead, sovereignty, and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ was introduced.

Secondly. The case of the people, who on hearing the awful thunders roar, and beholding the glare of such lightnings, attended with the sonorous trumpet, trembled: "All the people which were in the camp trembled."

Thirdly. The act of Moses: he brought forth the people out of the camp, to meet with God. And,

Fourthly. The descent of the Lord on mount Sinai, and the consequences which attended it: "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

I am first to consider and set forth the solemn apparatus, with which this display of the glory, majesty, godhead, sovereignty, and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ was introduced.

When Jehovah, the Lord God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, who appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush, who had displayed his power in controlling the agents in nature, making them evidences of his eternal power and godhead, when he wrought his wonders in the land of Ham, who brought out Israel from among them, and most divinely appeared at their head, going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in fire by night; when by his presence in the cloudy pillar he had conducted them to Sinai, he then descended on that mount, in the same cloud, to deliver the law, at which time he bowed the heavens, shook the earth, and caused Sinai to shake and quake from its foundations. The day for his majestic appearance and delivery of the law being come, he was revealed in flaming fire. All the terrors of fire and smoke, lightnings, thunders, and an earthquake, assembled together, composed a scene, to which nothing upon earth can be compared, but the terrors of a volcano, as they have been described to us in the writings of those who have been eye witnesses of them. Divines have considered the tremendous exhibition on mount Sinai, as an argument and earnest of the future destruction of the world by fire: we may suppose it is with a view to this moral use of the terrible scene, which attended the delivery of the law that the prophet reminds us of Horeb,

when he foretels the conflagration of the world, Mal. iv. 1.

This day was ushered in with thunders, lightnings, and a thick cloud on the top of the mount, with this the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud and sonorous was heard. Nature felt the effects of it; all the visible elements were disordered; fire, the most terrible of all created elements, displayed its fury, burning and consuming all before it, scorching the ground, and causing the mountain to smoke. Under this appearance, Jehovah Jesus descended on the top of Sinai. The thick and dark cloud composed an awful and gloomy tabernacle for his residence; the lightnings, thunders, and tempests, were suited to strike terrors into the minds of the people, who were eye and ear witnesses of this tremendous display of majesty and omnipotence. Thus God descended on Sinai, with fire, cloud, and glory, and with ten thousands of his saints; the mountain burned unto the midst of heaven; the top of it was covered with blackness and darkness; the tempests, thunderings, and lightnings, were exceeding terrible; the sound of the trumpet was still more awful. With all the regalia, Jehovah displayed his near approach to the people of Israel on the mount.

I will endeavor next to point out what these things were expressive of: the dark cloud in which the Lord dwelt, was expressive of his

invisibility: it was also expressive of the majesty of God, of whom the psalmist saith, "Clouds and darkness are round about him." It was also expressive of his glorious presence, and of his judgments against the transgressors of his holy law. The mountain burning with fire, was expressive of God's majesty on it, and also of his wrath against all the transgressors of his law, who should live and die under its awful curse: it is doubtless from this tremendous blaze of fire, which broke forth from between the thick darkness, that it is said, "Our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29. which is taken from Moses, who says to the Israelites, "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God," Deut. iv. 24.

The thunderings and lightnings, with the blackness, darkness, and tempest, might serve to denote the terror of this dispensation, the horrible curses of the law against Christless sinners, and the great confusion and disquietude raised in the mind of a sinner, when truly awakened to feel himself a convict of God's law, and liable to, and deserving of eternal damnation.

The sound of the trumpet, which added greater awe, and created greater terror in the mind, than all the other solemn apparatus, made it like a day of judgment unto them. Thus the glory, majesty, godhead, sovereignty, and holiness of the Lord Jesus, their Savior, who had

“brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” was displayed. I have already said it was the same divine person who appeared unto Moses in the bush, and brought the ten desolating judgments on the land of Egypt, who led his people out of it, and went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, who descended in the same symbolical cloud, on the top of mount Sinai, arrayed in all these demonstrative proofs of his eternal power and godhead, and the Holy Ghost says the same.

In the sixty-eighth psalm, the prophet celebrates the majesty and magnificence of Jehovah's appearance in Zion, his holy habitation, as the mighty conqueror of all the enemies of his people, riding upon the cherubim, as in a triumphal chariot, with all the host of heaven, as it were, in his retinue; and this he compares with his descent on Horeb; “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, (*or thousands repeated*): the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place:” or, Sinai is in the sanctuary, so Dr. Horne reads it: then it follows, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among you,” verses 17, 18. These transactions being figurative ones, the apostle Paul has applied these last words to our

Lord's ascension up into the highest heaven, Eph. iv. 8. The martyr Stephen, in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, says, that the angel spake to Moses, and the fathers of the Israelitish nation on mount Sinai, which is a full proof that it was Christ, the essential Word, who spoke out the ten commandments out of the midst of devouring fire, and who is described in the following grand and august manner, Deut. xxxiii. 2. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; at his right hand went a fiery law for them." And the apostle speaking of this dispensation of the law on mount Sinai, expressly says, that "Christ's voice then shook the earth," Heb. xii. 26. From hence we have undeniable evidence and testimony that it was Christ who gave the law, who was present on the mount, and whose voice in the thunder, trumpet, and in the voice of words, shook the earth.

Having considered and set before you the solemn apparatus with which this display and manifestation of the glory, majesty, sovereignty, and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the King and Lawgiver of his people was introduced, I proceed on with my subject.

And will, secondly, consider the case of the people, who, on hearing the awful thunders roar, and beholding the glare of such lightnings,

attended with the sonorous sound of the trumpet, "all the people which were in the camp trembled." No wonder they should, because the apparatus shewed, that with God is terrible majesty; they had solemn memorials and evidences, that no sinner, no creature, could stand before the Holy Lord God, upon the footing of any thing of his own; that his wrath would burn like fire, and smoke and burn to the lowest hell, against sinners found before him in their sins, and under the sentence of the holy law.

The hearts of these people were touched, their souls were as melting wax, and they trembled at the sound and blast of the loud shrilling trumpet; so that according to the apostle, Moses cried out, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And a greater than Moses, even the Lawgiver himself, the Lord Jesus, when made man, made under the law, made sin and a curse, and to deliver his people from it, suffered the penalties, and sustained the righteous displeasure of his Father's displeasure, due to the sins of his people, he trembled, was in an agony, sweat a bloody sweat, and cried out, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; mine heart in my body is even as melting wax," Psalm xxii. 14. Such a display of God's majesty, such discoveries of his holiness, such roaring thunders, such awful lightning, and the solemn trumpet sounding so loud, so long, and so shrill, which

was the warning to them of their near approach to God, filled them with the most profound awe; so that "all the people which were in the camp trembled."

Reader, hearer, consider the subject before thee! Thou must stand before the holy Lord God. The thought is solemn; the event will be decisive: thou wilt either be found in thyself, or in Christ; in thy sins, or in Christ's righteousness: thou wilt either hear God himself saying unto thee, "Come ye blessed, or depart thou cursed into everlasting fire." As sure as thou art summoned, thou must make thine appearance before him, who is the heart-searching, and rein-trying God, whose holiness is essential, before whom the angels veil their faces, whose majesty and Godhead is sufficient to fill the mind with the most awful dread; whose wrath is such, that at the displays of it, the earth trembles: his holiness is such, that he cannot pardon sin without an infinite satisfaction; he cannot admit a sinner in his sins into his kingdom of glory; nothing of thine own will bear his examination; not a thought, word, or action of thine, can come up to the demands of his holy law: if thou therefore standest before him at his bar in thyself, in thy sins, thou wilt be eternally banished from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

This majestic display of glory, majesty, Godhead, sovereignty, and holiness on mount Sinai,

will be an eternal testimony for God, and against thee, whoever thou art, let thy profession be what it may, that except thou art brought off from all false hopes, and led off thyself, and translated into Christ, thou wilt not be able to stand at God's bar, but the sentence of the law against transgressors must be executed on thee: all of which is contained in this denunciation, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them."

The scene and glory displayed at Sinai, was like the day of judgment; it was, doubtless, a memorial of it; all the expressions concerning the greatness of God's wrath, to sinners out of Christ, seem to be taken from it; and what the sacred writers declare concerning our Lord's being revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, seems to be borrowed from what is recorded of his appearance on mount Sinai to the Israelites.

I proceed, thirdly, To consider the act of Moses, at this time and place, when all the people which were in the camp trembled. "He brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God." A most wonderful approach! Their hearts trembled, their souls were as melting wax, their minds were most awfully impressed with the conceptions they had of God in his self-existent essence, persons, perfections,

glory, and absolute sovereignty, over all things in heaven and in earth ; if they drew back and started at this, no marvel ; if they could not bear this great blaze of light, brightness, and fire, which darted through the thick cloud where God was, it is not to be wondered at.

Moses led them forth out of the camp to meet God : he went before them, and stood between the Lord and them, as a mediator ; he repeats this circumstance, and says, “ The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire ; I stood between the Lord and you, at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord, for ye were afraid by reason of the fire,” Deut. v. 4, 5.

Moses and the people stood at the nether part of the mount : according to the Hebrew writers, they stood thus, Moses, as their head and mediator, in the front ; and then the first-born, the priests, which came near unto the Lord ; after them the heads of the tribes, the rulers ; after them the elders, then the officers ; after them, all the men of Israel ; then the little ones ; and after them the women and the strangers : and they all stood here, and saw the mountain on a smoke, covered with a thick impenetrable cloud : and they were to hear the voice of the Lord ; which leads me to speak,

Fourthly, Of the descent of the Lord on mount Sinai, and the consequences which at-

tended it: "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

Jehovah, who filleth heaven and earth with his immensity and omnipresence, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is said to descend, or come down, on special occasions, and particular places, when he manifests forth his glory, in any visible and extraordinary manner. Here on the mount he manifested his glorious presence to his people, in smoke, cloud, and fire. "The mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness." See Deut. iv. 11.

Many and various are the records of it in the sacred volume. Deborah and Barak when they sang their triumphant song of victory to the Lord, for gaining success over Sisera, the captain of Jaban's host, take notice of it, saying, "Lord, when thou wentest out of Sier, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water, the mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel," Judges v. 4, 5. In the eighteenth psalm, a triumphant hymn sung by David, in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and out of the

hands of Saul: when the prophet begins to describe the manifestation of divine power in favor of his suffering saint, he borrows his imagery from this illustrious display of Jehovah's, on mount Sinai, see ver. 7 to 15. and read them at your leisure, they being too long to quote. In the sixty-ninth psalm, the prophet commemorates the wonders wrought for Israel, when Jehovah, by his presence in the cloudy pillar, conducted them through the wilderness; when descending to deliver the law, he caused Sinai to quake from its foundations. "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness. Selah. The earth shook, the heavens dropped at the presence of God, even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." Also, in other psalms, as in the prayer of the prophet Habbakuk, notice is taken of this majestic display of Jehovah on mount Sinai; "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise, and his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power; before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." Hab. iii. 3, 5. Thus God revealed himself in flaming fire; his word is like fire, he is a "consuming fire:" and thus he gave

forth his law, which from these tokens of his majesty, is called a fiery law.

“The mountain quaked, the hills trembled, they leaped like rams, they skipped like lambs,” Psalm cxii. 4, 6. The heavens dropped, and Sinai was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. All the while the people stood, as before related, at the nether part of the mount: the mountain was burning, and the trumpet continued sounding so loud, so shrill, that Moses, the mediator, cried out, and spake; what he said is not here recorded, but it is probable it was what the apostle says, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” And God answered him by a voice; and it is likely it was heard by the people, and served to comfort Moses and them.

“And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up,” ver. 20. which argues his being strong in faith. He being with Jehovah on the top of the mount, receives particular orders to go down, and most solemnly forbid the people, not to break in upon the bounds set, on pain of death; and that the priests who stood nearer the bounds than the people, sanctify themselves, lest it should prove their destruction: all of which was to shew that no flesh can approach God, upon the footing of the covenant of works,

nor upon the bottom of mere creatureship ; it is by the God-man Christ Jesus alone, that there can be access to the three in Jehovah.

Moses descends from the top of the mount, and repeats the Lord's solemn charge ; and the priests, elders, and people, standing in the order before given, and in the proper place and distance appointed ; God spake out of the midst of devouring fire, clouds, and darkness, with a great voice, all the ten words, or commandments, so that all the people heard his voice, and understood what was delivered unto them.

The law was given by the ministration of angels, it is called the " word spoken by angels," Heb. ii. 2. It is said to be ordained by " angels in the hand of a mediator," Gal. iii. 19.

The people of Israel are said to have received the law by the " disposition of angels," Acts vii. 53. which is to be understood of angels attending when the law was delivered, of the Lord making use of them as his ministring servants, who formed in the air the voices heard, shook the rock, and caused the earth to tremble. It was ordained by them ; not that they were the authors of it, but it might be written and spoken by them, as the instruments and ministers God made use of.

Though the tables are said to be the work of God, and the writing the writing of God, and to be written with the finger of God, and he is said

to speak all the words of it; yet this hinders not, but that all this might be done by means of angels, who might be employed in disposing and fitting the stones in the form they were, and in writing the law upon them. They formed in the air those articulate and audible sounds when the law was delivered; were also concerned in the thunders and lightnings, and in the blowing of the trumpet, that waxed louder and louder at that time. I conceive the apostle Paul takes his views of, and represents Christ, as revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. from this account given by Moses, of the Lord's descent on mount Horeb, with thousands of angels.

The eternal Three, in the one incomprehensible Jehovah, having adopted this people, by a national covenant, agreeable to his promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had divine authority to command, and they, as favoured with the grace and privileges of adoption, were under the highest obligations to obey. The blessed relation in which Jehovah stands to his people, is the motive to obedience. In what was uttered, the nature, persons, and perfections of Godhead were expressed, the revealed will of Jehovah was made known; and all contained in the moral law was holy, just, and good. It was a preface to the covenant of grace; hence he says, "I am the Lord, thy God, which have

brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Thus Jehovah, the Savior, made himself known as Zion's King, the King of his church and people. In reference to it, the prophet says, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us." Isaiah xxxiii. 22. All being delivered, contained in the ten commandments, it is added, ver. 18. of the twentieth chapter, "And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off;" the fear which possessed their minds, is very expressive of the effect of the law, in the hearts of awakened persons, before they are brought to Christ, who alone can save them from the curse of the law. The spirit of bondage, is the spirit of all Hagar's children, of all legalists, of all who are under the law.

The Israelites who had come near, and stood under the mount, were now so moved with fear, that they retired and stood afar off; and they said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." The heads of the tribes spake thus for the people unto Moses; thus they desired that he might be a mediator between God and them. What they said was well pleasing to the Lord, so

that he at or upon it promiseth Christ unto them, see Deut. xviii. 15—18. “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shalt thou hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord God any more, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken; I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him.”

Moses bids the people not to fear, he would have them dismiss their exceeding great fear, for “God (says he) is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces that ye sin not.” And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. Thus Jehovah, the Savior, came down on mount Sinai, and upon the earth, shewed them his great fire, and the Israelites heard his great voice out of the midst of the fire, God talked with them, and they lived. Moses having, as mediator, a near access to God, received from him a body of laws, by which they were to form and regulate their commonwealth.

This Sinai transaction and covenant with the Lord, and the people of Israel, whereby he solemnly declared himself to be the Lord their God, and took them for his peculiar people, was framed after the example and shadow of spiritual and heavenly things. Their patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices; and in the more remarkable passages of their lives, they were shadows of him who was to arise as the head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. In this transaction at Sinai was laid the foundation of the Israelitish polity; and a right view and understanding of it is the best key to unlock various passages throughout the old testament, the book of Psalms, and the sacred prophecies: whoever would have a clear and consistent view of the titles of God, of the promises and threatenings of God to his people Israel, of the peculiar honor and dignity of that nation, of their laws, and obligations to the Lord, must study this covenant transaction. May the Lord bless what I have set before you concerning it; may you rightly consider it, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Amen.