

LETTER IV.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

IN my last letters I endeavoured to prove that the covenant of the church of God is the same, under the different dispensations. In this I intend to notice the principal improvements that have taken place, notwithstanding this sameness. An individual may pass through a variety of changes from infancy to adult years, and yet be the same individual still. Such is the case I conceive with the church of God ; she has been improved in her circumstances, but is the same church still. It has pleased God, always to deal with his church in a way of covenant. I have already stated, that I believed the covenant made with Abraham was the covenant of promise the covenant of grace. That its promises extended to all things, both of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.— See 1 Tim. 4. 8. Yet this same covenant, is now revealed with some advantages ; with Abraham it was ratified by typical sacrifices: but now by the true victim—the lamb without blemish or spot, that taketh away the sins of the world. Its promises are also more explicitly stated, and the way of acceptance more clearly defined, when it is said “ he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” Its requirements are also modified. Those of a ceremonial nature are lighter: those of a moral or spiritual nature, more explicitly stated and enforced.

The church is also blessed with greater light. Formerly she had Moses and the prophets ; now to these are added Jesus and his apostles. Formerly the Holy Spirit communicated to her a degree of life, but now Jesus has come that she might have it more abundantly. Formerly she had powerful motives to consecrate herself to the service of her God ; but now since Jesus has come, and actually given himself for his bride, those motives are greatly increased.

But perhaps in no respect is her circumstances more altered and improved, than in exchanging the ceremonial law, for the simple and more spiritual worship of the house of God under the present dispensation. It pleased God for