

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
GALATIANS.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Epistle bears such a similarity to the Epistle to the Romans, in the manner wherein St. Paul argues against justification through the works of the law, that we need not wonder if some celebrated Divines have supposed them both to have been written with the same intent. We find, in both Epistles, not only the same arguments against justification by works, and in support of justification by faith in Christ, but nearly the same arrangement also. The example of Abraham's faith is brought as a proof in both; the gathering of the people under Christ as their common Mediator; the spirit of adoption under the new dispensation; all this is explained nearly in the same terms to the Galatians as to the Romans; and forms so just a parallel between these two Epistles, that we meet every where the same ideas, tending to the same end, as the doctrine is in both fundamentally the same. But when, from a general view, we pass to a more minute examination of St. Paul's reasoning, and more attentively consider the adversaries with whom he contends, and the errors that he opposes, we shall then discover the difference between these two Epistles.

The Jews, enemies to Christ, and fixed in rejecting his gospel, knew no other justification than that of works, being totally unacquainted with justification by faith. This error had crept into the synagogue through ignorance and superstition, and had become strengthened by the vanity of the Pharisees and some other sects. The Apostles attacked it in all their discourses, and spared no pains in establishing the contrary doctrine, justification by grace through faith. It was also against this unjust prejudice that St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans; as evidently appears from ch. iii. x. and xi. where we find him disputing with the unbelieving Jews; and he shows it clearly in ch. ix. 31, 32. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 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." Such then were the adversaries whom St. Paul opposed, "the unbelieving Jews;" and the error which he opposed was, "justification by the works of the law." This is manifest.

But to the first error had succeeded a second, which might be considered as branching out from the first, and which arose from the very bosom of the church: this was, the acknowledging of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and as the Saviour of Israel, but in such sort, however, as to deem it necessary to justification, that to faith in Christ should be added the Mosaic ordinances and the righteousness of works.

works. This error, more subtle and deceiving than the preceding, was broached by certain preachers of the gospel, who, having been formerly of the sect of the Pharisees, had imbibed a part of their venom, and had poured it into the church: Certain men which came down from Judeah, says St. Luke, Acts xv. 1. taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And St. Paul tells us, in the same chapter, ver. 5. that they were certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed the gospel, who taught that it was needful to circumcise the Christians newly converted from Heathenism, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Whereupon the Apostle St. Peter, giving his opinion in the council at Jerusalem, asserts, as a fundamental truth in the church, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, ver. 11. that is, by the grace of Jesus Christ only, and not by the righteousness of the law; for that was the ground of the present dispute against those erroneous ministers, who, in preaching Jesus Christ, did not, like the unbelieving Jews, insist upon justification by the works of the law only, without the grace of Christ; for what, even nominal, Christian would have listened to such a doctrine as that?—But it was against those false teachers of Christ, who had spread their error among the Galatians, that St. Paul wrote this Epistle; and this is the error which he opposes with the utmost ardour. He calls it another gospel, ch. i. 6. but an untrue gospel, meriting condemnation; and he laments that the Galatians, who had suffered themselves to be deceived by it, had removed from Christ; he expresses his regret nearly in the same manner as the prophets of old reproached the idolatrous Jews with forsaking the Lord, because they served him not exclusively; but to the worship of the true God, which they had not forsaken, they added the adoration of idols. The excuse of those false teachers was, that it was not prudent to irritate the Jews too far, since they were already too much prejudiced against the gospel; and that, by a little tenderness toward their favourite opinions, the righteousness of works, and the Mosaic observances, they might, by degrees be brought into the church. The pretence was specious, and might deceive some; but St. Paul, who, by the Spirit of God, discovered the danger of it, and foresaw its consequences, could not endure that such indulgences should be admitted into religion to destroy the truth and essence thereof, ch. i. 10. And he loudly disapproved of the behaviour of St. Peter, who, without intending to revive the ceremonies of the law, against which he had given his opinion, in the strongest manner, in the council of the Apostles, (Acts xv. 7—11.) still was inclined thus far to favour the prejudices of the converted Jews at Antioch—that they should not eat with the Gentiles. Gal. ii. 11, &c. St. Paul then takes up the subject of these erroneous teachers; and shows, from ch. ii. 16. to ch. v. 6. that our justification rests entirely and solely upon faith in Jesus Christ, and that it has no dependence whatever upon the righteousness of works, nor upon the observances of the law, as will be more fully explained in the comment. The Apostle adds, according to his custom, many exhortations to piety; and he concludes this Epistle, nearly as he began it, by laying open to the Galatians the spirit and intentions of those subtle teachers, who had preached to them a corrupt gospel; protesting that, for his own part, he would continue all his life to embrace the cross of Christ, seeking no other mode of salvation than in the grace and merits of the divine Redeemer.

CHAP. I.

He wondereth that they have so soon left him and the Gospel; and pronounceth a sacred curse on those that preach any other Gospel than he did: he learned the Gospel not of men, but of God: and sheweth what he was before his calling, and what he did presently after it.

[Anno Domini 49.]

PAUL, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead);

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

^a See Rom. 1. 1, 5. Mat. 10. 2. Acts, 9. 3, 6, 15. & 22. 10, 15. & 26. 16—18. Ver. 11, 12. Ch. 2. 7. Tit. 1. 3. Eph. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 12. 4, 11, 12. & 11. 5. ^b Eph. 1. 19, 20. Acts, 2. 24, 32. & 3. 15. & 4. 10. & 10. 40. & 13. 30, 35. Rom. 4. 24, 25. & 8. 11. & 6. 4, 9. & 10. 9. 1 Cor. 6. 14. & 15. 15. 2 Cor. 4. 14. Col. 2. 12. 1 Thes. 1. 10. Heb. 13. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 8. ^c See Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. & 13. 14. Jude, 2. ^d Ch. 2. 20. Mat. 20. 28. John, 1. 29. & 10, 11, 15. Eph. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. & 2. 24. & 3. 18. Heb. 9. 14. 1 John, 2. 2. & 4. 9, 10. ^e John, 15. 19. & 17. 14. Ch. 6. 14. 1 John, 2. 16. & 5. 4, 5. 19. Rev. 4. 3. with 11. 65, 17. Heb. 2. 5. & 6. 5. ^f Rom. 4. 25. & 8. 3, 32. Eph. 1. 3—11. & 2. 4—10. ^g See Rom. 16. 27. Jude, 25. Pf. 115. 1. Eph. 3. 21.

CHAP. I.

BECAUSE the false teachers had called St. Paul an *Apostle* of men, and had said that he was made an Apostle by the church at Antioch, or at best by the Apostles in Jerusalem, he began his letter with affirming, that he was not an Apostle of men; but an Apostle appointed by Jesus Christ himself, and by God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead, ver. 1.—By mentioning the resurrection of Jesus, St. Paul glanced at the miraculous manner in which he himself was made an Apostle by Christ after his resurrection; and of which St. Luke has given an account, Acts, ix. 3—9. He alluded to it likewise ver. 5. where he calls it *God's revealing his Son to him*. So that St. Paul, both in respect of the time and of the manner of his being raised to the apostolic office, instead of being inferior, was superior to the other Apostles: Christ came from heaven to qualify him for that office, and to confer it on him.—Next he told the Galatians, that all the brethren who were with him joined him in this letter; by which he insinuated that they attested the whole of the facts he was going to relate, ver. 2.—Then expressed his surprise, that the Galatians were so soon removed from his doctrine to another gospel, ver. 6.—which he told them was no gospel at all, ver. 7.—And because the false teachers affirmed, that after conversing with the Apostles in Jerusalem, Paul had become sensible of his error, and now enjoined circumcision, chap. v. 11. he twice anathematized every one who preached contrary to what they had heard him preach, though it were himself, or an angel from heaven, who did it, ver. 8, 9.—Then asked his opponents, whether in so speaking he endeavoured to please men or God, ver. 10.—It seems, the Judaizers had represented him to the Galatians, as one who suited his doctrine to the inclinations of his hearers. Besides, the Judaizers were for the most part bad men, and capable of affirming any falsehood which they thought would promote their views.

Farther, the Apostle's enemies pretended not only that he was an Apostle sent forth by men, but that he was taught the Gospel by Ananias, or by the brethren at Antioch, or by the Apostles at Jerusalem; But he solemnly

averred, that he received the Gospel from no man, nor body of men whatever, but from Christ himself, ver. 11, 12.—And in proof of that asseveration, he appealed to his manner of life both before and after his conversion, as a thing well known: that before his conversion he furiously persecuted the church, ver. 13.—And was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers, ver. 14.—In that period of his life, therefore, he had neither opportunity nor inclination to learn any thing from the Christians. And being so great a zealot for the law, if he afterwards taught that no man could be justified by the law, nothing but the strongest evidence had induced him to take up that opinion.—He told them farther, that when it pleased God to make him an Apostle, he consulted with no person in Damascus, no Jewish doctor concerning his commission as an Apostle, nor any of the brethren concerning the things that he was to preach, ver. 15, 16.—Neither did he go to Jerusalem to receive the Gospel from them who were Apostles before him; but he went into Arabia, and again returned to Damascus; and there, acting as an Apostle, he preached the Gospel, which he had received by revelation from Christ, in the synagogues, where, as St. Luke informs us, Acts, ix. 22. he confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that Jesus is the very Christ, ver. 17.—And did not go to Jerusalem till three years after his conversion: and then abode fifteen days with St. Peter, lest, keeping any longer at a distance from the Apostles, it might be suspected that he was acting in opposition to them, ver. 18.—On that occasion St. Paul saw no other of the Apostles except James, the Lord's brother, ver. 19.—Having related these facts, he solemnly appealed to God for the truth of them, because they effectually established his apostleship, and confuted the calumnies of his enemies. For if it was true, that in his first visit to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he saw none of the apostles but Peter and James, (supposing it had been in their power to have made him an apostle,) it is not probable that without the knowledge and consent of the rest they would confer that office on him, a new convert, of whose sincerity they had not as yet sufficient proof, ver. 20.—After spending fifteen days with St. Peter, which was too short a space of time for him to be instructed by St. Peter in the complete know-

6 I marvel that ye are so^h soon removed from him thatⁱ called you into the grace of Christ unto^k another gospel:

7 Which is not another; ⁱ but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

^h Ch. 3. 1—5. & 4. 9. & 5. 7. Pf. 106. 13. Jer. 2. 13, 31. ⁱ Ch. 5. 8. 1 Thes. 5. 24. 2 Thes. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 15. 2 Pet. 1. 3. Rom. 8. 28, 10. & 9. 24. 1 Cor. 1. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 9. ^k 2 Cor. 11. 4. Rom. 10. 3. ⁱ Acts, 15. 1, 5, 24. Ch. 5. 10, 12. & 6. 12. Acts, 20. 29. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 2. & 11. 4, 13. Ch. 4. 2. Heb. 13. 8.

knowledge of the Gospel, he went into the countries of Syria and Cilicia, whither he was sent by the brethren, because the Jews in Jerusalem, exceedingly enraged against him for having deserted their party and gone over to the Christians, sought to kill him, ver. 21.—And from Cilicia, where he abode several years, he went I suppose into Galatia. Thus it came to pass, that for a long time after St. Paul's conversion, he was personally unknown to the churches in Judea; who had heard nothing or little more concerning him, but that he who formerly persecuted the Christians, now preached the faith and facts concerning Christ, which he had formerly endeavoured to disprove. ver. 22, 23.—This so great a change of behaviour in so violent an enemy, occasioned the churches to glorify God on account of his conversion, ver. 24.

From these things it is evident, that when St. Paul went into Cilicia, and from Cilicia into Galatia, he had seen none of the Apostles, except St. Peter and St. James; and that he had never been at any general meeting of the Apostles to receive from them, either the office of an apostle, or the doctrine of the Gospel. And therefore if, through divine grace, he was the favoured instrument of converting the Galatians in some journey which he made into their country from Cilicia, the doctrine that he preached and the miracles which he wrought, must have been bestowed on him, not by man, but by the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Father, as he himself has affirmed.

Galatians] The subject and design of this epistle is much the same with that of the epistle to the *Romans*; but treated in somewhat a different manner. The grand business of it is, to dehort and hinder the *Galatians* from bringing themselves under the bondage of the Mosaical law. The two epistles indeed have particular relation to different sorts of Jews; that of the *Romans*, to Jews who opposed and rejected the whole Gospel, as unnecessary; this of the *Galatians*, to Jews who, while they believed the Gospel, urged that a submission to the law of Moses was at the same time necessary. But as the principles of those Jews did in some things coincide, and their sentiments were the same with regard to the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses; so there may be an affinity and agreement in the arguments which the Apostle advances in confutation of the one and the other. The *Galatians* were descended from those *Gauls* who had formerly invaded Greece, and afterwards settled in Lower Asia. St. Paul was the first who preached the Gospel among them; and therefore, referring ch. i. 8, 9. to what he had before taught them, he does not in this epistle lay down at large the doctrines of the Gospel, as he does in that to the *Romans*. He also speaks with greater freedom and pithos to the *Galatians* than he does to the *Romans*; to whom, being a stranger, he writes not in so familiar a stile; nor in his reproofs and exhortations uses

so much the tone of a master. The following disorders had crept into the churches of Galatia: *First*, Some zealous for the Jewish constitution had very nearly persuaded the Galatians out of their Christian liberty, and made them willing to submit to circumcision, and all the rituals of the Jewish church, as necessary under the Gospel, ch. i. 7. iii. 3. iv. 9—21. v. 1—10. *Secondly*, Their dissentions and disputes in this matter had raised great animosities among them, to the disturbance of their peace, and the setting them at strife one with another, ch. v. 6—15. The reforming them in these *two* points seems to be the main business of this epistle; wherein St. Paul endeavours to establish them in a resolution to stand firm in the freedom of the Gospel, which exempts them from the bondage of the Mosaical law; and labours to reduce them to a sincere love and affection one of another: concluding with an exhortation to liberality and general benevolence, ch. vi. 1—10. These being the matters, about which he had it in his mind, under the infallible direction of the Spirit of God, to write to them, he seems here as if he had finished; but upon mentioning ver. 11. *how large a letter he had written to them with his own hand*, the former argument concerning circumcision, which filled and warmed his mind, broke out again into what we find ver. 12. to 17. of the 6th chapter.

Ver. 1. Paul, an Apostle,] The first four verses contain the preface or introduction to this epistle: the general view of it plainly shews St. Paul's chief design to be, to keep the Galatians from hearkening to those Judaizing seducers, who had almost persuaded them to be circumcised. These *perverters of the Gospel of Christ*, as St. Paul himself calls them, ver. 7. had, as may be gathered from ver. 8. and 10. and from ch. v. 11. and other passages of this epistle, made the Galatians believe that St. Paul himself was for circumcision. Till he had set them right in this matter, and convinced them of the falsehood of this aspersion, it was in vain for him by other arguments to attempt the re-establishing of the Galatians in the Christian liberty, and in that truth which he had preached to them. His first endeavour therefore was, to remove this calumny; and to that purpose the present introduction,—different from what we find in any other of his epistles,—is extremely well adapted. He declares here, at the entrance, very expressly and emphatically, that he was not sent by *men*, on their errands: nay, that Christ, in sending him, did not so much as convey his apostolical power to him by the ministry or intervention of any man; but that his commission and instructions were all entirely from Christ himself by immediate revelation. This of itself was an argument sufficient to induce them to believe, *first*, that what he taught them, when he first preached the Gospel to them, was the truth, and that they ought to adhere firmly to it. *Secondly*, That he changed not his doctrine, *what-*
ever

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

2 Cor. 11. 14. 1 Cor. 16. 22. Ver. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. Tit. 3. 10.

ever might be reported of him. He was Christ's chosen officer, and had no dependence on men's opinions, nor regard to their authority or favour in what he preached; and therefore it was not likely that he should preach one thing at one time, and another thing at another.

[*Not of men,*] Not sent by men at their pleasure, or by their authority; not instructed by men what to say or do, as we see Timothy and Titus were, when sent by St. Paul; and Judas and Silas, when sent by the church of Jerusalem. *Neither by men;* that is, his choice and separation to his ministry and apostleship was so wholly an act of Christ, that there was no intervention of any thing done by any man in the case, as there was in the election of Matthias. We may see all this explained at large, ver. 19-22, 16, 17. and ch. ii. 6-9. It is with great propriety that the Apostle mentions here the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as perfectly agreeable to the main point that he had in view, which was, to assert the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; since God the Father declared, by raising him from the dead, that he accepted the atonement which Christ had made, and gave him a discharge for all his faithful saints, from any further claim upon him for the satisfaction of his justice: and as it is this which is the great foundation of our faith in Christ, so the Apostle says elsewhere that he was raised again for our justification. Rom. iv. 25.

[*Ver. 2. And all the brethren, &c.*] Not all believers in general, but those who accompanied St. Paul in his travels, and assisted him in preaching the Gospel. Such were Timothy, Clement, and others, who are denominated *fellow-labourers* in other places. See Philip. iv. 3. 1 Thes. iii. 2. When St. Paul writes to the Christians of any particular city, he generally uses the singular number, *the church*: but the province of Galatia contained several cities and churches. This was an evident seal of his apostleship, since in Galatia, a small province of the Lesser Asia, he had, after no long stay among them, planted several distinct churches. It is remarkable, that the Apostle does not make use of any of the endearing epithets, as the *beloved*, the *saints*, the *brethren*, &c.; and there might be good reason for it: the Galatians had suffered his very mission to be called in question, without attempting any vindication of it, and had given countenance to doctrines which were subversive of the very foundation of Christianity.

[*Ver. 3. Grace be to you, &c.*] These words are both a Christian salutation, and an apostolical benediction. As they are a *salutation*, they express a wish and desire of the best blessings in behalf of those saluted: whence we may learn, that religion does not abolish and destroy, but spiritualize and improve civility, humanity, and common courtesy. The *heathens* wished health to their saluted friends; the *Jews*, *peace*; that is, all manner of good: but the *Christians*, *grace and peace*. Again, the words may be understood as an apostolical and ministerial *blissing*. The Apostles were the patriarchs of the church of the

New Testament; and as a spiritual Father, St. Paul here blesses his children, wishing them first *grace*, then *peace*. Peace must be sought after grace, and not expected before it; peace without grace is no peace; there can be no peace with the Creator, no sanctified peace with the creatures, except we are first made partakers of the gracious love and favour of Almighty God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[*Ver. 4. From this present evil world,*] "From the vicious customs and practices of the world." The original is ambiguous: some would render it *from the evil of this present world*. Mr. Locke argues from 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8. that the term *Αἰὼς ὁ ἐπαι* signifies the *Jewish nation*, under the Mosaic constitution; and supposes these words to contain an intimation, that God intended to take the Jews themselves out of it, so far was he from any purpose of bringing the Gentiles under it. But it is certain that the word *Αἰὼς* often signifies the same with the word *κόσμος*, that is, *the world*. See Matth. xiii. 39, 40. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Tit. ii. 12.

[*Ver. 6.*] We have before observed, that St. Paul's first endeavour in this epistle was to satisfy the Galatians, that the report spread of him, that he preached circumcision, was false. Till this obstruction which lay in his way was removed, it was to no purpose for him to go about to dissuade them from circumcision, though that be what he principally aims at in this epistle. To shew them that he promoted not circumcision, he calls their hearkening to those who persuaded them to be circumcised, their being *removed* from him; and those that so persuaded them, *perverters of the Gospel of Christ*, ver. 6, 7. He further assures them, that the Gospel which he preached every where, was that, and that only, which he had received by immediate revelation from Christ, and was no contrivance of man; nor did he vary it to please men; that would not consist with his being a servant of Christ, ver. 10. And he expresses such a firm adherence to what he had received from Christ, and had preached to them, that he pronounces an *anathema* upon himself, ver. 8, 9. or any other man, or angel, that should preach any thing else to them. To make out this to have been all along his conduct, he gives an account of himself for many years backwards, even from the time before his conversion; wherein he shews, that from a zealous persecuting Jew he was made a Christian, and an Apostle by immediate revelation; and that having no communication with the Apostles, or with the churches of Judea, or any man in this sense for some years, he had nothing to preach but what he had received by immediate revelation. Nay, when fourteen years after he went up to Jerusalem, it was by revelation; and when he there communicated the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, Peter, James, and John approved of it without adding any thing, but admitted him as their fellow-apostle. So that in all this he was guided by nothing but divine revelation, which he inflexibly adhered

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 For ° do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

11 But I certify you, brethren, ^p that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion; how that

[°] Deut. 4. 2. & 12. 32. Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 18. Eph. 3. 3, 8. Acts, ix. xxiii. xxvi. 2 Cor. 12. 2, 11, 12.

[•] 1 Thes. 2. 4. 1 Sam. 29. 7. Mat. 28. 14. Jam. 4. 4.

^p Ver. 1. 1 Cor. 15. 1. 3.

to so far, that he openly opposed St. Peter for his Judaizing at Antioch. All which account of himself tends clearly to shew, that St. Paul made not the least step towards complying with the Jews in favour of the law; nor did, out of regard to man, deviate from the doctrine which he had received by revelation from God, ch. i. 6.—ii. 21.

From him that called you into the grace of Christ] These words might be rendered with equal propriety, *called you by, or through the grace of Christ.* The passage plainly points out St. Paul himself. See ch. v. 8. But then one might wonder how he came to use those words; since at first sight it might appear to have sounded better to have said, *Removed from the Gospel I preached to you, to another Gospel, than, Removed from me who called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel.* But if it be remembered that St. Paul's design here is to vindicate himself from the aspersion cast on him, that he preached circumcision, nothing could be more suitable to that purpose than this way of expressing himself.

Ver. 7. Which is not another;] I take the Greek here to signify, says Mr. Locke, *which is not any thing else.* For, *first*, the words themselves, the context, and the business the Apostle is upon, do all concur in this sense. *Secondly*, It is suitable to St. Paul's design here to tell them, that to their being removed to another Gospel, nobody else had contributed, but it was wholly owing to those Judaizing seducers. Dr. Heylin renders this and the preceding verse as follows: *I wonder you have so soon deserted unto another Gospel from me, who called you by the grace of Christ; which comes only from this, that there are some who perplex your minds, and would subvert the Gospel of Christ.*

Ver. 8. Though we, or an angel from heaven,] Some have imagined, that the Apostle uses this expression as a prophetic prevention against crediting the pretences of *Cerinthus* and *Mahomet*, who both pretended to have received their revelations by the ministry of an angel. It may likewise glance at the manner of giving the law, which, according to the Apostle, was by the ministrations of angels. By *preaching any other Gospel*, he means the preaching any thing as Gospel besides what he had preached.

Ver. 9. Let him be accursed.] Though we may look upon the repetition of the *anathema* here to be for the adding of force to what he says; yet we may observe, that by joining himself with an angel in the foregoing verse, he does as

good as tell them, that he is not guilty of what deserves that *anathema*: skillfully insinuating to the Galatians, that they might as well suspect an angel should preach to them a doctrine different from his, that is to say, a false gospel, as that he himself should; and then in this verse he lays the *anathema* wholly and solely upon the Judaizing seducers. See on 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Ver. 10. Do [now persuade men,] Do I court the favour of men;—or, Do I ingratiate myself with men, rather than with God? The words *now* and *yet* cannot be understood without a reference to something in St. Paul's past life. What that was which he had particularly then in his mind, we may see by the account he gives of himself in what immediately follows; namely, that before his conversion he was employed by men in their designs, and made it his business to please them, as may be seen Acts, ix. 1, 2. But when God called him, he received his commission and instructions from him alone, and immediately entered upon his office, without consulting any man whatever; preaching that, and that only, which he had received from Christ; so that it would be senseless folly in him, and no less than the forsaking his Master Jesus Christ, if he should *now*, as was reported of him, mix any thing of man's with the pure doctrine of the Gospel, (which he had received immediately by revelation from Jesus Christ,) to please the Jews, after he had so long preached only that; and, to avoid all appearance or pretence of the contrary, had so carefully shunned all communication with the churches of Judea; and had not, till a good while after his conversion, and then very sparingly, conversed with any, and those but a few, of the Apostles themselves, one of whom he openly reprov'd for Judaizing. This is a plain assertion of the divinity of the doctrine which he had preached. The word Πιστω, translated *persuade*, is sometimes used for making application to any one to obtain his good will or friendship. Hence, Acts, xii. 20. the words *πεισωντες Βλασιν*, are translated, *having made Blastus their friend.* See 1 Thes. ii. 4.

Ver. 11. The gospel which was preached of me] This being spoken indefinitely, must be understood "in general—every where," and so gives us the import of the foregoing verse.

Ver. 13. In the Jews' religion;] This does not signify the religion originally taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the tradition of the elders. Grotius.

Ver.

1 beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it :

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my * equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who * separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; * immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood :

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them

which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 Then after three years I * went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But * other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, * before God, I lie not.

21 * Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia ;

22 And was unknown by face unto ^b the churches of Judæa which were ^c in Christ :

^a Acts, 8. 3. & 9. 1. 21. & 22. 4. & 26. 7. 1 Cor. 15. 9. Phil. 3. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 13. ^b Acts, 22. 3. & 26. 5. & 23. 1 Phil. 3. 4-5. If. 29. 13. Mark, 7. 3, 4. ^c Gr. equal in years. ^d If. 49. 1. Jer. 1. 5. Mat. 11. 26. Acts, 9. 15. & 13. 2. & 22. 21. 1 Cor. 15. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 13. 16. ^e Mat. 16. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Eph. 1. 17, 18. & 3. 3, 4, 8. Acts, 26. 16-18. & 9. 15. & 22. 21. Rom. 11. 13. & 15. 19. Ch. 2. 2, 7-9. 1 Tim. 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 11. Col. 1. 27. 1 Cor. 2. 2. ^f Mat. 16. 17. Eph. 6. 12. John, 15. 19. Prov. 3. 5, 6. ^g Or returned. Acts, 9. 26. ^h 1 Cor. 9. 5. Mark, 6. 3. Mat. 10. 2-4. & 13. 55. Acts, 2. 13, 14. & 8. 1. Jam. 1. 1. Jude, 1. ⁱ Rom. 1. 9. & 9. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 23. & 11. 11, 31. 1 Thes. 2. 5, 10. 1 Tim. 5. 21. 2 Tim. 4. 1. ^j Acts, 9. 30. & 11. 25. ^k Ver. 2. 1 Thes. 2. 14. ^l Rom. 16. 2, 3, 7-13. & 15, 14. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21. John, 15. 2. 1 Thes. 1. 1. & 2. 14. Acts, ix. xxii. xxvi. & 9. 21.

Ver. 14. And profited—my equals in, &c.] And made proficiency—my contemporaries of, &c.

Ver. 15. Who separated me] See Jer. i. 5. and the history of this Apostle's call, Acts, ix. 1, &c.

Ver. 16. That I might preach him among the heathen ;] This was undoubtedly the scheme of Providence concerning St. Paul, who has been accordingly distinguished by the name of *The Apostle of the Gentiles*. Dr. Wells and some others understand the last clause of this verse as if the Apostle had said, "Immediately after the recovery of my sight, without conferring with any man in the world, or so much as applying to Ananias himself for advice, I retired by divine direction into the desert of Arabia ; where, after some time spent in devotion, I had a full revelation made to me of the most important facts and doctrines of Christianity ; [which some suppose to be the rupture referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 2.] and then, after my return thence, preached at Damascus for the first time." Mr. Locke too insists, that the word *εὐθὺς* here does not refer to St. Paul's immediately engaging in the work of the ministry, without applying for advice to any man ; but to his going into Arabia : but the same word is used by St. Luke in his history of the Acts, who, without taking any notice of St. Paul's departure into Arabia, says, that after he had recovered strength, he continued *certain days at Damascus, and (εὐθὺς) immediately preached Christ in the synagogue*, Acts, ix. 19, 20. So that it seems most probable that, after his conversion, St. Paul was so well instructed in the knowledge of the Gospel by the revelation that was then made to him, that he *immediately* began, without consulting any man, to preach the word at Damascus, before he went thence into Arabia : which is most suitable to the natural order of the words, and best agrees with the account in the Acts of his first entering on his ministry.

VOL. II.

Ver. 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem] What the Apostle says in this and the preceding verse, is to evince to the Galatians the full assurance that he had of the truth and perfection of the Gospel, which he had received from Christ by immediate revelation ; and how little he was disposed to have any regard to the pleasing of men in preaching it ; insomuch that he did not even communicate or advise with any of the Apostles about it, to see whether they approved it or not.

Ver. 18. After three years] That is, from his conversion. The Apostle seems to have used great caution, to prevent any suspicion that he had gone even to St. Peter for the sake of instruction ; for he says, first, that he went only to see him, and then that he abode with him ; but says not a word of having been taught by him.

Ver. 19. James, the Lord's brother.] He was the Son of Alpheus and Mary, the sister of the virgin ; so that he was *cousin-german* to Jesus. See Mark, iii. 18.

Ver. 20. Before God, I lie not.] A revelation of the facts and doctrines of Christianity immediately from Jesus Christ himself, without the assistance of any human teacher, so wonderfully agreeing in all its branches with that which the Lord Jesus Christ had taught on earth, both before and after his resurrection, was so extraordinary an event, and of so great importance to those whom St. Paul visited, and to whom he wrote, that one cannot wonder he should think proper to assert it in so solemn a manner. We have great reason, while we read the attestation which he has given to the truth of what he says, to acknowledge, that it is of a piece with the many signs and wonders attending both his conversion and his ministry.

Ver. 22. Which were in Christ:] That is, "believing in Christ." See Rom. xvi. 7. What he takes such particular notice of here, does not tend to the proving that he was a true Apostle ; but serves very well to shew, that

3 B

23 But they had heard only, ^d That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.
24 And they glorified God in me.

^d 1 Cor. 15. 8—10. 1 Tim. 1. 11—14.

^c Acts, 11. 18. Col. 2. 3, 4. Luke, 7. 16. & 15. 32. 1 Tim. 2. 11—19. Acts, 9. 31.

that in what he preached, he had no communication with those of his own nation, nor took any particular care to please the Jews in preference to the Gentiles.

Ver. 24. In me.] On my account. Doddridge.

Inferences.—With what entire satisfaction may we depend upon the divine authority of the Gospel which was delivered by the Apostle Paul, who has testified, even upon oath, that he received it, together with his commission to preach it, not from any mere man, but immediately from Jesus Christ, who is God-man! He is evidently God, as all apostolic and ministerial authority, spiritual blessings, and the whole of the Gospel revelation, proceed jointly and equally from the Father and him, in distinction from, and in opposition to, all that is derived from men; and he is as evidently Man, as he died and rose again from the dead: and O how infinitely important and beneficial is his death, who gave himself an atoning Sacrifice for our sins, that he might deliver us from them, and from all the evils of this present world; and whose resurrection is a high demonstration of the acceptableness and efficacy of his death for these great and holy purposes! On this ground we may, if we be real believers or genuine penitents, comfortably hope for grace and peace from the Father and the Son. But with what holy detestation should we reject those who would corrupt the Gospel of Christ, and substitute another pretended gospel in its stead, for justification in any other way than alone through faith in him! How grievous and astonishing is it, that any, who once seemed to embrace this blessed Gospel, should be turned aside from it to some other scheme of doctrine, which, in reality, is no gospel at all, and never can bring salvation to them! And how heavy is the curse that lies upon those who pervert them! But O, what a wonderful and happy change does the grace of our Lord Jesus make, when it effectually reaches the heart! It reveals Christ in them who were utter strangers to him before; and makes them ready to confess the ignorance and error, in which they formerly gloried; it turns the greatest bigots for superstition and human traditions, and the most inveterate enemies to Christ, into sincere believers; it changes the most furious persecutors of his people into true lovers of him and them, and frequently into zealous preachers of that Gospel which they before sought to destroy: and it makes those, who preserve this union with the Lord Jesus, such faithful servants of Christ, that they no longer seek to please men by any sinful compliances with them: and when he calls such faithful souls to his work, they yield obedience to him, without consulting the interests of the flesh, or the opinion of men. And O what matter of thanksgiving and joy is it to his churches, whenever they hear of such monuments being raised to the praise of the glory of his grace, whether they have ever seen their faces or not! They glorify God for his power and mercy exercised in their behalf, and for all the service

to his people and cause, which is done and may be further hoped for by them. And for the encouragement of such ministers, if they be faithful unto death, they have the glorious promise, that “they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” Dan. xii. 3.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Among the heaviest burdens which lay on the great Apostle Paul, was the care of all the churches, where many errors soon crept in, and Judaizing teachers sought to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel, and therewith to decry him who was the zealous defender of its glorious privileges. Nowhere had these seducers practised with more success than among the Galatians; for whose recovery to the purity of the faith, the Apostle writes this epistle.

1. He begins with his apostolical address. *Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man*, not assuming a character to which he had no title, nor acting under any ordination merely human, but immediately called to this high office, and commissioned by Jesus Christ himself, who personally appeared to him; and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, declaring thereby his perfect satisfaction in the great atonement of his Son: and therefore St. Paul's commission bore this eminent distinction, that while the chief Apostles were only ordained by Jesus in the days of his humiliation, the great Apostle of the Gentiles received his call and office from the glorified Redeemer, exalted on his mediatorial throne.

2. All the brethren who were with him, joined the Apostle in his address to the churches of Galatia, concurring with him in sentiment, and declaring thereby their approbation of the doctrines which he maintained, and of the just reproofs that he was about to give.

3. He wishes that the best of blessings may attend them. *Grace be to you*, in all its happy effects of pardon, comfort, strength, purity, and peace, the consequence thereof; all proceeding of free grace and unmerited love from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, the meritorious cause of all our mercies; who gave himself for our sins, in infinite compassion to our wretched state, humbling himself to take our nature upon him, and, as our substitute, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree; that he might obtain eternal redemption for his faithful saints, and deliver us from this present evil world, from the guilt and condemnation under which it lies, and from the power of iniquity by which it is enslaved; and this has our adored Redeemer done for his faithful followers according to the will of God, and, or even, our Father; who is reconciled to his believing people by the blood of the cross, and regards them as dear children. *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!* Both to the Father and his co-equal Son, for such a contrivance of infinite love and grace, in order to the redemption of lost souls, be all praise and honour ascribed by men and angels, in time and to eternity!

Note,

CHAP. II.

He speaketh of having gone up to Jerusalem again, and for what purpose: that Titus was not circumcised: and that he resisted Peter, and told him the reason, why he and others, being Jews, do believe themselves in Christ to be justified by faith, and not by works: and that they live not in sin, who are so justified.

[Anno Domini 49.]

THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up ^b by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which ^c I preach among the Gentiles, but ^d privately to them which were of reputation, ^e lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3 ^f But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

4 And ^g that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in

^a Acts, 15. 2. Ch. 1. 18. ^b Acts, 13. 2. & 19. 21. & 16. 9, 10. & 18. 9. & 21. 17, 18. & 23. 11. ^c Ver. 9. Acts, 9. 15. & 26. 17, 18. Rom. 1. 16, 17. & 15. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 23. & 2. 2. Eph. 3. 8. Acts, 15. 1, 2. ^d Or *severally*. Ver. 9. 1 Cor. 9. 5. Acts, 1. 13. ^e Mat. 10. 16. Eph. 5. 15. Phil. 2. 16. 1 Cor. 9. 26. Mic. 7. 5. 1 Thes. 3. 5. ^f 1 Cor. 9. 21. with Acts, 16. 3. & 15. 10, 24, 28. 29. Ch. 5. 2, 4. ^g Acts, 15. 1, 10, 24. 2 Cor. 11. 13, 15, 20, 26. Ch. 3. 25. & 4. 9. & 5. 1, 13. & 6. 12, 13. & 3. 1.

Note, 1. The oblation of Jesus, once for all, is the only substantial foundation of the sinner's hope towards God. (2.) This world in which we dwell is full of evil: we must in spirit and temper be delivered from it, or we shall be condemned with it.

2dly, Abruptly the Apostle hastens to his point, and expresses,

1. His astonishment at their defection from the faith. *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, from the blessed God himself, and from us his ministers, unto another gospel, different from that which we preached to you, wherein the glorious grace of a Redeemer was exalted; which new doctrine is not indeed another gospel, bringing no glad tidings to the sinful soul of free pardon and salvation by Jesus Christ; but the truth is, there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ, destroying the riches of the grace thereof, and adulterating the truth with the base alloy of error.* *Note;* there is but one way to regain the lost favour of God, and that is by grace through faith; and they who propose any other must perish with a lie in their right hand.

2. He expresses his detestation of any other pretended gospel besides that which he had preached to them. *But though we, or an angel from heaven, if we could suppose it possible, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, and lie down under the most dreadful anathemas of divine vengeance.* *As we said before,* with the deepest solemnity I repeat it, *If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received from us, let him be accursed.*

3dly, To vindicate himself from the aspersions of the Judaizing teachers, who affected to set up St. Peter and the other apostles as far his superiors, he enters into a detail of his divine mission and miracles.

1. He declares the scope of his preaching. *Do I now persuade men, or God, endeavouring to engage the Galatians to obey human inventions, or to submit to the gospel of the blessed God? (see the Annotations;) or do I seek to please men, and ingratiate myself with you, as the Jewish zealots? No. For I am well persuaded, that if I yet pleased men, and made that my study, to accommodate the gospel*

to their prejudices, *I should not be the servant of Christ, and with fidelity and simplicity discharge the trust committed to me.* *Note, (1.)* To please God, not men, must be our great design. (2.) It is impossible that our fidelity in preaching the gospel should not offend those, who, in pride and self-sufficiency, cannot bear the humbling truth of the necessity of submission to the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ for our acceptance before him.

2. He demonstrates to them the divinity of his mission. The gospel that he preached was not *after man*, a human invention, or received at second-hand from men's information, but immediately by *revelation* from the exalted Jesus, now entered into his glory. They knew his past conversation; what a bigot he had been for Judaism; how greatly he had excelled many of his fellow-students in rabbinical knowledge, exactly skilled in all their laws and traditions: to propagate these, he had exerted all his zeal, and, with rage approaching to madness, had persecuted the professors of the Christian name with the savage fury of the most barbarous foe. No prejudices of education, therefore, could have led him to embrace Christianity; but, on the contrary, such a riveted enmity against it could be only overcome by some very extraordinary method of conviction. *But when it pleased God, who, of his rich grace, separated me from my mother's womb to serve him in the gospel, and called me by his grace, in such a distinguishing manner, when I was going with the most implacable enmity to persecute the disciples at Damascus; when, I say, God was graciously pleased then to reveal his Son in me, making my inmost soul, by divine irradiation, acquainted with the fulness of the redemption which is in him, that I might preach him among the heathen, as peculiarly ordained to be their apostle,—immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, consulting no longer my own worldly ease, interest, or honour, or asking advice about what God had so clearly determined: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, as if I needed instruction, or a confirmation in my office; but, divinely taught and ordained, I immediately entered on my work, and went into Arabia, where the gospel had not been preached before, and returned again unto Damascus. Then, after three years,*

Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage :

5^a To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the

Ver. 21. Col. 2. 7, 8. 2 Cor. 7. 8. & 3. 7. 8. Ch. 3. 1, 2. & 4. 6, 21. with 2 Thef. 2. 17. Phil. 2. 15.

I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, not to learn of him, but to communicate the success of my labours, and enjoy the comforts of Christian fellowship with him and other brethren there; and abide with him only fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother, or near kinsman; so that I received not my knowledge or commission from them. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not, but with the deepest solemnity appeal to him for the truths that I advance. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, preaching the gospel; and was, during many years, unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ, and professed faith in his name; so that from them I could not have received any knowledge of the truth. But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me, ascribing to him praise for my wondrous conversion. Note, Christ must be revealed by his Spirit in us, as well as by his word to us, if we would know him to the saving of our souls.

CHAP. II.

FROM the history which the Apostle gave of himself to the Galatians, in the preceding chapter, it appears, that, from the time of his conversion to his coming with Barnabas from Tarsus to Antioch, he had no opportunity of conversing with the apostles in a body; consequently, in that period he was not made an Apostle by them.—In like manner, by relating in this chapter what happened when he went up from Antioch to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, in company with Barnabas, and Titus, a converted Gentile, he proved to the Galatians that he was an apostle before he had that meeting with the apostles in a body, ver. 1.—For at that time, instead of receiving the gospel from the apostles, he communicated to them *the gospel*, or doctrine which he preached among the idolatrous Gentiles: not because he acknowledged them his superiors, or was in any doubt about the matter; but lest it might have been suspected that his doctrine was disclaimed by the apostles, which would have prevented his success among the Gentiles, ver. 2.—And to shew that the apostles, to whom he communicated his gospel, approved of it, he told the Galatians that not even Titus, who was with him, though an idolater before his conversion, was compelled by the apostles to be circumcised, although it was insisted on by the false brethren, who endeavoured to bring the Gentiles under bondage to the law, ver. 3, 4.—And that he and Titus did not yield in the least to these false brethren, by obeying any part of the law as a condition of salvation, for so much as an hour, that the truth of the gospel might remain with the Galatians, and all the Gentiles, ver. 5.—Next, to shew that the apostles of the greatest note were by no means superior to him, St. Paul affirmed, that from them he received nothing. For, however much they had

been honoured by their Master, these apostles added nothing either to his knowledge or to his power, or to his authority as an apostle, ver. 6.—But, on the contrary, perceiving that he was commissioned to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, as St. Peter had been to preach it to the Jews, ver. 7.—because he who fitted St. Peter for preaching to the Jews, had fitted St. Paul for preaching to the Gentiles, by bestowing on him the gift of inspiration, and by enabling him, not only to work miracles in confirmation of his doctrine, but to communicate the spiritual gifts to his converts, ver. 8.—they, knowing these things, instead of finding fault either with his doctrine or with his practice, James, Cephas, and John, who were the chief apostles in point of reputation, gave him the right hands of fellowship; thereby acknowledging him to be an apostle of equal authority with themselves, and equally commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, as they were to the Jews, ver. 9.—The only thing which they desired of him was, to exhort the Gentiles to contribute for the relief of the poor, ver. 10.

Moreover, to make the Galatians fully sensible of his authority as an apostle, and of his knowledge in the gospel, Paul told them, that when Peter came to Antioch, after the council, he opposed him openly, because he was to be blamed, ver. 11.—For, before certain persons, zealous of the law, came to Antioch from James, Peter, who had been taught by a vision to call no person unclean, did eat with the converted idolatrous Gentiles: but when these zealous Jewish believers were come, he withdrew for fear of their displeasure, ver. 12.—And others of the brethren in like manner dissembled; inasmuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation, ver. 13. But this behaviour being contrary to the truth of the gospel, Paul publicly rebuked Peter for it, in the hearing of all the disciples at Antioch. And because, after giving him that reproof, he explained to the church the true doctrine of the gospel concerning the justification of sinners, he judged it proper to give the Galatians a short account of the things which he said on that occasion, ver. 14—21.—And as it does not appear that Peter, when thus reproved of Paul, offered any thing in his own defence, we may believe that he knew the truth, and acknowledged publicly, that obedience to the law of Moses was not necessary to the salvation either of the Jews or of the Gentiles. Or, if he did not make this acknowledgment verbally, his silence on the occasion was equally expressive of the truth.

St. Peter's behaviour towards the Gentile converts in Antioch having proceeded, not from ignorance of the truth of the gospel, but from an unreasonable fear of the displeasure of the zealous Jewish believers, it serves to shew us, that one's knowledge is not always of itself sufficient to prevent one from falling into sin; as his denying his Master on a former occasion, shews that the resolutions

made

gospel might continue with you.

6 But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no

matter to me: * God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me :

¹ Ver. 2, 9. Ch. 6, 3. ¹ Cor. 15, 10. ² Cor. 11, 5. & 12, 11. ¹ Thes. 5, 13. Heb. 13, 7, 17. * Rom. 2, 11. Deut. 10, 17. ² Chr. 29, 7. Job, 34, 19. Acts, 10, 34. Eph. 6, 9. Col. 3, 25. ¹ Pet. 1, 17.

made in our own strength will not avail us, whatever measures of grace we may have previously experienced; but that, in every case, the assistance of God is necessary to render one's knowledge of what is right, and his purpose to do it, effectual in practice: and that the person who has made the greatest proficiency in knowledge and holiness ought to be diffident of himself, and humble, agreeably to Solomon's maxim, Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway.*

Ver. 1. *Fourteen years after*] This was the time when he went up from Antioch to the council at Jerusalem, about the question whether the Gentiles were to be circumcised. See Acts, xv. 4, &c. This is the earliest mention that we meet with of Titus; for he is nowhere mentioned by St. Luke in the Acts; and what we read of him in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, as well as in the second to Timothy, was later by some years. He is here said to have been a Greek, (or Gentile,) and, being born of Gentile parents, was not circumcised; but where or when he was converted, is uncertain; only we may conclude that he was converted by St. Paul, from the stile which he gives him of his own son, after the common faith. Tit. i. 4. And as he now took Titus with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, so he employed him afterwards on several occasions, and appears to have regarded him with great affection and endearment.

Ver. 2. *I went up by revelation,*] Some suppose that this means only that he went up according to the revelation which he mentions as having received, ch. i. 12. But it seems rather to be here implied, that in their sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, the church at Antioch were directed by a revelation made, either immediately to St. Paul himself, or to some other of the prophets there. The conference which he had in private with the chief of the church of Jerusalem, concerning the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, seems not to have been barely concerning the doctrine of their being free from the law of Moses: that had been openly and warmly disputed at Antioch, and was known to be the business which they came about to Jerusalem. But it is probable that it was to explain to them the whole doctrine which he had received by revelation; by the fulness and perfection whereof [for it is said, ver. 6. that in the conference they added nothing to it] they might see and own what he preached to be the truth, and him to be one of themselves, as indeed they did. Ἀδελφοί, them, signifies those at Jerusalem: the words καὶ ἰδιῶν ἐκ τῶν δυνάμεων are exegetical, shewing the particular manner, and persons, and import, but privately to the more eminent. It was sufficient for his purpose to be owned by those of greatest authority; and so we see he was by James, Peter, and John, ver. 9. and therefore it was safest and best to give an account of the gospel that he preached in private to them, and not publicly to the whole church.

St. Paul uses the word *running* for "taking pains in the gospel" The metaphor is probably taken from the Olympic games. He seems here to give two reasons, why at last, after fourteen years, he communicated to the chief of the apostles at Jerusalem the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles; when, as he shews to the Galatians, he had formerly declined all communication with the converted Jews. *First*, he appears to intimate that he did it by revelation. *Secondly*, he gives another reason; namely, that if he had not communicated as he did with the leading men there, and satisfied them of his doctrine and mission, his opposers might unsettle the churches which he had planted, or should plant, by urging, that the apostles knew not what it was that he preached, nor had ever owned it for the gospel, or him for an apostle. Of the readiness of the Judaizing seducers to take any such advantage against him, he had lately an example in the church at Corinth.

Ver. 3. *But neither Titus was compelled, &c.*] This served as a plain evidence to the Galatians, that the circumcising of the convert Gentiles was no part of the gospel which he laid before these men of note, as what he preached to the Gentiles; for if it had, Titus must have been circumcised; for no part of his gospel was blamed or altered by them, ver. 6. It is difficult to discover of what other use the mentioning of Titus here can be, than to shew to the Galatians that what he preached contained nothing of circumcising the convert Gentiles. If it were to shew that the other apostles and church at Jerusalem dispensed with circumcision, and other ritual observances of the Mosaic law, that was needless, as having been sufficiently declared by their decree, Acts, xv. which was made and communicated to the churches before this Epistle was written, Acts, xvi. 4. Much less was this example of Titus of any force to prove that St. Paul was a true apostle, if that were what he was here labouring to justify: but considering his aim to be the clearing himself from a report that he preached up circumcision, there could be nothing more to his purpose than this instance of Titus, whom, uncircumcised as he was, he took with him to Jerusalem; uncircumcised he kept with him there; and uncircumcised he took back with him when he returned. This was a strong and pertinent instance to persuade the Galatians that the report of his preaching circumcision was a mere aspersions.

Ver. 4. *Into bondage;*] What this bondage was, see Acts, xv. 1, 5, 10.

Ver. 5. *To whom we gave place, &c.*] The *neither* in the 3d verse, according to propriety of speech, ought to have an *or* to answer it; and accordingly, in this verse, the word ἢ should be so rendered, *Neither was Titus compelled—nor did we yield to them a moment.* The point which those false brethren contended for was, that the law of Moses was to be

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the ¹ gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the* ^m *gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;

8 (For he that ⁿ wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was ^o mighty in me towards the Gentiles):

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be ^p pillars, perceived ^q the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; ^r that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 ^s Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was.

¹ Acts, 9. 15. & 22. 21. & 13. 46. & 28. 28. & 26. 17. 18. Rom. 1. 5. & 11. 13. & 15. 16, 19. Eph. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 11. ^m Acts, ii—xii. & 15. 7—9, 14. ⁿ Acts ii—v. viii. Mat. 28. 20. Luke, 24. 49. John, 14. 12. ^o Ch. 3. 5. Acts, 9. 16, 22—29. & xiii—xx. Rom. 1. 16, 17. & 15. 16, 19. 1 Cor. 3. 5, 10. & 9. 2. & 4. 15. 2 Cor. 3. 2, 3. & 11. 5. & 12. 11, 12. ^p Mat. 16. 18. Eph. 3. 20. Rev. 21. 14, 19. & 3. 12. Prov. 9. 1. Ch. 1. 15. Ver. 2. 6. ^q Rom. 1. 5. & 12. 3. & 15. 15. Eph. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 15. 10. Acts, 9. 15. 1 Tim. 1. 11, 12. Ver. 7. ^r Acts, 16. 23, 25, 30. ^s Acts, 11. 30. & 24. 17. Rom. 11. 25—28, 31. 1 Thes. 2. 14. Heb. 10. 34. 1 Cor. 26. 1, 2. 2 Cor. viii. ix. Heb. 13. 16. Jam. 2. 15, 16. 1 John, 3. 17. Prov. 19. 17. & 3. 27, 28.

be kept See Acts, xv. 5. St. Paul, who, upon other occasions, was so condescending that *to the Jews he became as a Jew*, &c. 1 Cor. ix. 19—22. yet when subjection to the law was claimed as due in any case, he would not yield in the least matter. This appears to be the meaning of the expression, *we gave not place by subjection*; for where compliance was desired of him, upon account of expediency, and not of subjection to the law, we do not find him stiff and inflexible; as may be seen, Acts, xxi. 18.—26. which was after the writing of this Epistle. In the next clause of this verse he gives us the reason why he yielded not to those Judaizing false brethren: it was, that the true doctrine which he had preached to the Gentiles, or their freedom from the law, might stand firm: a convincing argument to the Galatians that he preached not circumcision. See ver. 14. and ch. iii. 1. Dr. Heylin connects this and the 4th verse in the following manner, ver. 4. *And as to the false brethren, who insidiously crept in to spy out our liberty*, &c. ver. 5. *I would not yield to them by subjection*, &c. “Much had been done on several occasions,” says this writer, “in condescension to weakness, and from the motive of charity; but when things indifferent were required absolutely, and as a necessary subjection, then St. Paul resisted, as became him.”

Ver. 6. *But of those who seemed to be somewhat*,] St. Paul having shewn, in the preceding verses, what passed between the false brethren, and him, now proceeds to shew what passed between the chief of the brethren and himself; and therefore some introduce the verse with these words: *Thus we behaved ourselves towards the false brethren; but of those*, &c. However the words, *who seemed to be somewhat*, may answer the original; they certainly carry to an English ear a diminishing and ironical sense, contrary to the meaning of the Apostle, who speaks here of those for whom he had a real esteem, and who were truly of the first rank; for it is plain by what follows, that he means Peter, James, and John. Besides, the phrase *οἱ δοκῶντες* being taken in a good sense, ver. 2. and translated *those of reputation*, the same mode of expression should have been retained when the same term occurs. Every one sees that there is something implied at the beginning of this verse. Most commentators add the words, *I learned nothing*; but this enervates the reason subjoined at the close of the verse;—*I learned nothing of them,—for they taught me nothing*; but it

is very good reasoning, and suited to his purpose, to say that it was nothing at all to him how much those great men were in Christ's favour; “But as for those who were really men of eminence, what they were or are, matters not at all to me in the present instance; God accepts not the person of any man, but communicates the gospel to whom he pleases, as he has done to me by revelation, without their help: for in their conference with me, they added nothing to me;—they taught me nothing new, nor had they any thing to object against what I preached to the Gentiles.” Peter, James, and John, who appear from ver. 9. to be the persons here spoken of, seem, of all the apostles, to have been most in esteem and favour with their Master during his conversation upon earth: “But yet that,” says St. Paul, “is of no moment now to me. The gospel which I preach, and which God, who is no respecter of persons, has been pleased to commit to me by immediate revelation, is not the less true; nor is there any reason for me to recede from it in a tittle; for these men of the first rank could find nothing to add, alter, or gain say.” This is suitable to St. Paul's design here, to let the Galatians see, that as he, in his carriage, had never favoured circumcision; so neither had he any reason, by preaching circumcision, to forsake the doctrine of liberty in respect to the law of Moses, which he had preached to them as a part of that gospel delivered to him by revelation.

Ver. 8. *He that wrought effectually*] This may be understood to signify both the operation of the Spirit upon the mind of St. Peter and St. Paul, in sending them, the one to the Jews, the other to the Gentiles; and also the Holy Ghost bestowed on them, whereby they were enabled to do miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; in neither of which St. Paul, as he shews, was inferior, and so had as authentic a seal of his mission and doctrine as they had of theirs. Instead of, *was mighty*, we should read, *wrought effectually*.

Ver. 9. *And when James, Cephas, and John, &c.*] *And, being sensible of the grace wherewith I am endowed, James, Cephas, and John, who were esteemed main supports of the church in Judea, embraced me and Barnabas as their associates; and agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.* Heylin.

Ver. 10. *That we should remember the poor*;] “That we

forward to do.

11 But, when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner

of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

¹ Acts, 15. 35. Jude, 5. ¹ Tim. 5. 20. Ver. 5. Acts, 15. 5, 10, 24, 28, 29. ² Acts, 21. 20. & 10. 28. & 11. 3. ³ 1 Cor. 1. 16. ⁴ Cor. 13. 11. Rom. 15. 5, 6. Phil. 1. 10. & 2. 2, 3. Prov. 29. 25. ⁵ Col. 3. 9. Pf. 25. 21. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Eccl. 7. 20. Jam. 3. 2. ⁶ Ver. 12, 13, 15. Tit. 2. 11, 12. 1 Kings, 18. 21. Hof. 7. 8. & 11. 12. ⁷ 1 Tim. 5. 20. Prov. 27. 5. 2 Tim. 4. 2. ⁸ Acts, 10. 28. & 11. 3—18. & 15. 10, 24, 28, 29. ⁹ Rom. 3. 1, 2. & 9. 4, 5. with Mat. 9. 12. Eph. 2. 3, 12. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. ¹⁰ Acts, 13. 38, 39. Rom. 3. 28. 19—30. & 8. 1—4. ¹¹ 1 Cor. 6. 11. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 21. Phil. 3. 9. Heb. 7. 18, 19. ¹² Rom. 1. 17. & 3. 27, 28, 30. & 4. 3, 24. & 5. 1. Ver. 20. Acts, 13. 39. & 15. 9, 11. Phil. 3. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 21. ¹³ Rom. 3. 19, 20. Ch. 3. 10, 11. Job. 9. 3. Pf. 130. 3. & 143. 2. Eccl. 7. 20. Jam. 3. 2. ¹⁴ Ver. 16, 20. Phil. 3. 9. Rom. 5. 1. ¹⁵ Rom. 3. 10—19. Gen. 13. 13. Rom. 6. 1. 1 John, 3. 9. ¹⁶ Mat. 1. 21. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Heb. 9. 14, 25. 1 Cor. 1. 30. & 6. 11. ¹⁷ Gen. 44. 17. Josh. 22. 29. Rom. 3. 4, 6, 31. & 6. 2, 15.

"we should entreat all believers whom we meet with in our travels, to send some relief to the Christians in Jerusalem, who were at this time in great want and distress."

Ver. 11. Peter] Had St. Peter observed the law of Moses himself, St. Paul would not have blamed him for that. What he blamed him for was, his acting as if the Gentiles were obliged to live as did the Jews, in order to their being the people of God, and partakers of the blessings and honours of his kingdom. See on Rom. vii. 6.

Ver. 14. According to the truth of the gospel,] That is, "That freedom from the law of Moses, which was a part of the true doctrine of the gospel." In this sense he uses the word *truth* throughout the epistle; insisting on it, that this doctrine of freedom from the law of Moses was a part of the true gospel. Had this been matter only of private offence, certainly St. Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with St. Peter privately upon it, before he referred it to such an assembly. But as it was a public affair, in which great numbers were so sensibly affected, this method was most proper. Probably this happened after public worship; and it would seem the less surprizing, considering the conferences which used to be held in the Jewish synagogues, before the assembly was broken up. It has been very justly observed, that had any imposture been carrying on, the contention of these two great managers would probably have been an occasion of discovering it.

Ver. 15. We who are Jews, &c.] What the Jews thought of themselves, in contradistinction to the Gentiles,

see Rom. ii. 17—23. Dr. Heylin observes, that *finner* here, and ver. 17. and often elsewhere, signifies "a man in the state of nature, before that application of the merits of Christ which is termed *justification*." Christ is not the *minister of sin*, (as ver. 17.) to save such, while they continue in that state. He saves only those who, renouncing themselves, are justified through faith in him, and resigned to his Spirit for their purification. These last he *justifies*, from their entrance into a simple and entire resignation of themselves to him, and dependance on him, which is frequently, in scripture, called *faith*. See what kind of persons they are in the sequel, where St. Paul describes himself, and, by consequence, all who are in that state.

Ver. 17. If—we ourselves also are found sinners,] Those who are under the law, having once transgressed, remain always sinners, unalterably so, in the eye of the law; which excludes all such from justification. The Apostle, in this place, argues thus: "We Jews, who are by birth God's people, and not, as the profligate Gentiles, abandoned to all manner of pollution and uncleanness,—not being, nevertheless, able to obtain righteousness by the deeds of the law, have believed in Christ, that we might be justified by faith in him. But if even we, who have betaken ourselves to Christ for justification, are ourselves found to be unjustified sinners, liable still to wrath, as all are under the law, what deliverance have we from sin by Christ?—None at all: we are as much concluded under sin and guilt, as if we did not believe in him. So that, by joining *him* and *the law* together for justification, we shut ourselves out from justification, which cannot

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I ^m through the law ⁿ am dead to the law, ^o that I might live unto God.

20 ^p I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:

^q and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, ^r who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for ^s if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

¹ Ch. 5. 12. Ver. 12. ² Pet. 2. 20—22. ^m Rom. 3. 19, 20. & 7. 8—13. & 10. 4, 5. Ch. 3. 24. ⁿ Rom. 6. 12, 14. & 7. 4, 6, 9. & 8. 2. & 14. 7. Col. 3. 3. ^o 2 Cor. 5. 15. ¹ Thes. 5. 10. ¹ Pet. 4. 2, 6. Ver. 20. ¹ Cor. 10. 31. Heb. 9. 14. LUK^s, 1. 74, 75. ^p Ch. 5. 24. & 6. 14. Rom. 6. 6. & 8. 3, 4. & 7. 4. Eph. 5. 8. Col. 2. 10, 13. & 3. 3, 4. ^q 1 Pet. 1. 8. ² Cor. 1. 24. & 5. 7. John, 15. 4, 5. & 14. 19. Phil. 4. 13. Zech. 10. 12. ^r Ch. 1. 4. Mat. 20. 28. Eph. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 14. ¹ Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 13. ^s Heb. 7. 11. Rom. 11. 6. & 10. 3. & 9. 30—32. Ch. 5. 2, 4. Mat. 9. 13.

“cannot be had under the law; and we make Christ the minister of sin, and not of justification;—which God forbid!” See the *Inferences* and *Reflections*.

Ver. 18. I make myself a transgressor.] Many commentators consider this verse as a continuation of St. Paul's speech at Antioch, and would render and connect it thus: “On the contrary, so far are we from being made sinners by neglecting justification by the law, that if we taught the necessity of its works, we should become transgressors, in building again the things which we destroyed.” But if this interpretation was to be admitted, we should not only find it hard to clear up the argument, but must suppose that the following verses likewise are part of the speech to St. Peter, which would make them much less pertinent and natural, than if we suppose them the overflowings of St. Paul's devout heart in addressing the Galatians. His speech to St. Peter rather seems to have gone no further than the foregoing verse; and the conjunction *καὶ* is often used with such a latitude; that we might take it in the beginning of this verse to signify *now*, and so consider St. Paul as shewing here, that, whatever some insinuated to his prejudice, there was no inconsistency in his doctrine and practice with what he had then so openly declared.

Ver. 19. Through the law] *By the tenor of the law itself.* See ch. iii. 24, 25. iv. 21, &c. Rom. iii. 21. and vi. 14. comp. with vii. 4. What St. Paul says here seems to imply, that living under the law was to live not acceptably to God;—a strange doctrine certainly to the Jews! and yet it was true now under the gospel: for God the Father having put his kingdom in this world wholly under his Son, in a peculiar sense, when he raised him from the dead, all who, after that, would be his people in his kingdom, were to live by no other law but the gospel, which was now the law of his kingdom; and we see that God cast off the Jews, because, cleaving to their own constitution, they would not have this man to reign over them. So that what St. Paul says here is, in effect, this: “By believing in Christ, I am discharged from the Mosaic law, that I may wholly conform myself to the rule of the gospel, which is now the law to be owned and observed by all those who, as God's people, would live acceptably to him.” This appears visibly to be the Apostle's meaning, though the accustoming himself to *antitipos* may possibly be the reason why, after having said, *I am dead to the law*, he expresses his putting himself under the gospel by *living to God*.

Ver. 20. I am crucified with Christ:] See this explained, Rom. vii. 4. and vi. 2—14. The general meaning of the verse is, “The whole management of myself is conformable to the doctrine of the gospel, of justification in Christ alone, and not by the deeds of the law.” This, and the former verse, seem to be spoken in opposition to St. Peter's owning a subjection to the law of Moses by his *walking*, mentioned ver. 14.

Ver. 21. Grace of God:] See ch. i. 6, 7. to which this seems here opposed. The latter part of this verse will be found explained in St. Paul's own words, ch. v. 3—6.

Inferences, drawn from ver. 17. One of the greatest and most plausible objections alleged by unbelievers against the divine institution of the Christian religion, is the smallness of the influence that it may seem to have upon the lives and manners of its professors. If God condescended to give men an express *revealed law*, and to send so extraordinary a person as his own *eternal Son* to promulgate that law upon earth; it were natural to expect that it should have some very visible and remarkable *effects* in the world, answerable to the dignity of the thing itself, and worthy of its great Author. They who are blessed with such singular advantages, *what manner of persons*, as St. Peter expresses it, *ought they to be in all holy conversation and godliness!*

And are there then,—will unbelievers be apt to say,—are there to be met with, in the lives and manners of Christians, any considerable distinguishing characters, whereby to judge that they are really under the influence and peculiar guidance of such a divine Director?—Is there among those who call themselves Christians less of impiety and profaneness towards God, less of fraud and injustice towards men; than is found among the professors of other religions? Is there not too plainly the same boundless ambition, the same insatiable covetousness, the same voluptuousness and debauchery of manners, to be found among them, as amongst other men? Nay, have not moreover the pretences even of religion itself been the immediate occasion of the bitterest animosities, of the most bloody wars, of the most inhuman persecutions?—Have not the greatest immoralities of all kinds received too plain an encouragement from the reliance upon a power of repeating continually certain periodical *absolutions*; and much more from an imagination that the *practices* of a vicious life may be compensated before God by the observance of certain superstitious commutations?—Lastly, and beyond all this, has not even *the grace of God*, as the Apostle urges,

CHAP. III.

He asketh, what moveth them to leave the faith, and depend upon the law? They that believe are justified, and blessed with Abraham. And this he sheweth by many reasons.

[Anno Domini 49.]

O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey

^a Ch. 1. 6. & 2. 5, 14. & 4. 9. 16. & 5. 7, 8. & 6. 12, 13. ^b Rom. 15. 19. ^c 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. & 2. 2—4. Eph. 3. 8. ^d Acts, 2. 28. & 8. 15. & 15. 8. Heb. 6. 4. Eph. 1. 13, 14. & 4. 30. Ver. 5. ^e 1 Cor. 12. 7—13. ^f Rom. 1. 17. & 10. 16, 17. ^g Ch. 4. 9, 21. & 5. 7, 8. & 6. 12, 13. Heb. 7. 16, 18, 19. & 9. 9, 10.

urges, been itself too frequently turned into wantonness? That is, has not the fundamental grace of the gospel,—the gracious promise of pardon, upon true repentance and amendment, and faith in Jesus Christ, been itself abused into an encouragement of wicked living, in a dependance upon the formalities of a death-bed repentance?

Very great, and very just reproaches, indeed, are these upon many who profess themselves to be followers of Christ. But, that such objections have no conclusive consequence at all against Christianity itself, is what the Apostle, after a very affectionate manner, declares in the words above proposed for our reflection, and which he closes with a generous God forbid!—For, if, says he, I build again the things which I destroyed, I MAKE MYSELF A TRANSGRESSOR.

We will therefore endeavour to shew, from his words, first, “that the wickedness of the lives of those who call themselves Christians, is no argument against the truth and excellency of the Christian religion itself.”

Now, natural and necessary causes always and necessarily produce effects proportional to their natural powers: so that, from the degree or quantity of the effect, may always certainly be judged the degree of power and efficacy in the cause. But in moral causes the case is necessarily and essentially otherwise. In these, how efficacious soever the cause be, yet the effect, more or less, depends upon the will of the person upon whom the effect is to be wrought, whether the cause shall produce its proper effect or no.

The Christian religion affords men the most perfect instructions possible in the ways of holiness and virtue, and arguments infinitely strong to enforce the practice of them, jointly, with the greatest aids in behalf of the truly sincere. The effect of this doctrine upon the lives of men in the primitive times, before worldly corruptions entered into the church, was, through the grace of God, which can never be separated from any thing which relates to the salvation of souls, great and conspicuous: and if we understand the prophecies rightly, which relate to things yet to come, this effect will be much more remarkable in the latter ages; when the corruptions which now prevail among Christians shall be reformed, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the sea. As things at present stand, there are great numbers of men,—many more than are taken notice of in the noise and hurry of the busy world,—who, upon the foundation of a well-settled belief in the gospel of Christ, go on regularly in the course of a holy life, with a perpetual uni-

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the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified, among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

form sense of God upon their minds, and an assured expectation of a future judgment: nay, and even among those who value themselves upon despising the assistance of revelation, and rely entirely upon their own natural abilities in matters of religion, it is very plain that the greatest part of those right notions concerning God and virtue, about which they can now so readily and so clearly discourse, are really almost wholly borrowed from the light of that revelation which they are so desirous should be thought entirely needless. This, I say, is very plain, from the extreme ignorance of the heathen world, notwithstanding there are not wanting among them men of excellent natural abilities; and from the right notions of God to be found among Christians, in numbers of persons, even of the lowest capacities, and meanest employments, to a degree which few, exceeding few, even of the greatest philosophers, were ever able to arrive at. So very different a thing is it to discern the reasonableness of moral obligations, after they have been once clearly revealed; and to be able, without any assistance, to discover at first the same obligations by the mere strength of nature and reason.

But however this be, and supposing the effect of Christianity in the world had been much smaller than it has been, still this would be no argument at all against the truth and excellency of the doctrine itself: because, as was before observed, “in all moral causes it must always depend more or less on the will of the person upon whom the effect is to be wrought, whether even the most powerful cause shall produce its proper effect, or no.” When God himself calls men in the strongest and most efficacious manner that is consistent with his calling them at all, it is still in their own power not to hearken to that call, or at least not to yield to it finally;—not to be on the whole the better,—nay, to be the worse for it; much worse than if they had never known the way of righteousness. For as, where no law is, there is no transgression; so, on the other hand, and for the same reason, “where there is a law, not obeyed, that law worketh wrath; and sin, by this commandment, becomes exceeding sinful.” If therefore the effect were always to be the measure in judging of the goodness and excellency of a cause, the best and wisest laws would often, upon account of their very excellency, be the worst: the law of God would be chargeable with the malignity of sin, and God himself as the real and immediate author of evil.

The same may, in proportion, be said concerning reason,

A. G.

CCER

4 'Have ye suffered * so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

5 He therefore that † ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you,

† 2 John, 8. Ezek. 13. 24. Heb. 6. 4—6. 2 Pet. 7. 20—22.

* Or, *so great.*

† Ver. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 8.

even the absolute and necessary reason of things. But if it be no objection against the excellency of *reason itself*, that it very often is not able to make men act *reasonably*, and never of itself graciously, and no diminution to the *divine commandments in general*, that they frequently, not only fail of reforming men's manners, but even, on the contrary, do moreover make *sin to become the more exceeding sinful*; then, for the same reason, neither against the truth and excellency of *Christianity in particular*, can any argument be drawn from the wickedness of their lives who profess themselves Christians.

But, *secondly*, though the practice of any wickedness whatsoever affords no real argument against *Christianity itself*, yet it is always matter of very great and just reproach to the *professors* of this holy religion; as being the utmost contradiction, and the highest possible inconsistency with their profession. Nay, every vice that any Christian, so called, is guilty of, tends to defeat every end of the gospel of grace, and brings dishonour upon the name and upon the religion of Christ; for hence unbelievers are confirmed in their infidelity, and scoffers are encouraged to make a scorn of every thing sacred. See Rom. ii. 24.

From what has been said we are led, *thirdly*, to a very plain and easy rule, by which we may judge of the malignity and dangerousness of any error in matters of religion. In proportion as the error tends to reconcile any vicious, vain, or impious practice with the profession of religion; or, as St. Paul expresses it, to make *Christ the minister of sin*,—in the same proportion is the *doctrine* pernicious, and the teachers of it justly to be deemed corrupt. And this is the reason why our Lord, when he warns Christians to be aware of *false teachers*, who should come to them in *sheep's clothing*, but *inwardly were ravening wolves*, gives us this mark by which for ever to distinguish them:—*By their fruits ye shall know them*. The fruits of holiness and true goodness are marks which admit no counterfeit. If the course of a man's life be holy, devout, self-denying, virtuous, and charitable, and his doctrine leads men towards nothing but the love of God in Christ Jesus, holiness, goodness, and charity, in expectation of a righteous judgment to come,—this is a mark, or character, to which nothing has any *similitude* but what is itself really and truly *the same*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The Apostle, in vindication of his divine mission and ministry, as in nothing inferior to the other apostles, relates what passed at Jerusalem, when, fourteen years after his conversion, he went up thither, with Barnabas and Titus, by a special revelation from God, on occasion of the dissensions which the Jewish teachers had raised in the church of Antioch, about the necessity of circumcising the Gentiles, and engaging them to keep the law of Moses.

1. He communicated and explained in conversation, to those who were of greatest note and reputation, the gospel

which he preached among the Gentiles, in all its freedom and latitude, *but privately*, because of the known prejudices which many of the Jewish Christians entertained concerning the necessity of still observing the law. And this method he took, *lest by any means he should run, or had run in vain*, and, through the clamours of the hot zealots for Judaism, his *past labours* should have been in some measure rendered abortive, or his future usefulness be obstructed.

2. Though he acted with all prudence, he made no sinful compliance with their prejudices, maintaining the purity of the gospel, and firm to his principles, that the Gentiles were in no manner obliged to the observation of the Mosaic law: therefore, though Titus was a Greek, he was not compelled to be circumcised; nor did the apostles insist upon it. And St. Paul took Titus, a Gentile Christian, and minister of the gospel, on purpose that in him he might bear a public testimony against those false brethren, who had craftily insinuated themselves into the church at Antioch; and with prying eyes observed the Apostle's conduct at Jerusalem, whether he would there maintain the liberty of the Christian Gentiles from the Mosaic institutions. For they would have been happy if they could have had such a plea as the circumcision of Titus, to urge the same upon the Gentile converts. *But not for an hour* would the Apostle and his colleague Barnabas give way to such a dangerous imposition, *that the truth and freedom of the gospel* might be maintained inviolable, and the Gentiles enjoy that entire liberty from every yoke of bondage which in Christ Jesus was preached unto them. *Note*, False brethren are our most dangerous foes. Against them we need peculiar watchfulness.

3. Though he conferred with the Apostles of chief eminence, and who were so preferred to him by the Judaizing teachers, whatever had been the case *formerly* (*ἑσθῆ*), and whatever privileges they had enjoyed above him, that affected not the matter at present. *God accepteth no man's person*: however great the names of Peter, James, and John were, *they added nothing* to him, nor contributed the least to his improvement in knowledge; so thoroughly had he been taught of God the mysteries of gospel truth.

4. The issue of the conference was, the perfect satisfaction expressed by the Apostles at Jerusalem in what they heard; it appearing most undeniably, that the same Lord, who had wrought by St. Peter's ministry among the Jews, who was more particularly sent to them, had wrought as effectually by St. Paul among the Gentiles; to whom they therefore concluded the apostleship of the Gentiles was committed. Therefore these pillars of the church, James, Cephas, and John, convinced of the grace and apostleship conferred upon him, with cordial affection gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, and concurred in their judgments, that it fully appeared to be the will of God that Paul and his fellow-labourer should go to the Gentiles
more

doth be it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

6^h Even as Abraham believed God, and it was * accounted to him for righteousness.

^a Gen. 15. 6. Rom. 4. 3. Jam. 2. 23. ^b Or imputed.

more immediately, while their own ministry should be more generally confined to the Jews: only they recommended it to them that they should remember the poor saints in Judea, and obtain some relief for them from the Gentile churches,—a service in which St. Paul warmly engaged. So that it was evident, from the result of this conversation, that there was a perfect harmony in doctrine between St. Paul and the apostles at Jerusalem, and that they fully recognized his divine authority and mission.

2dly, Nothing could serve more effectually to establish the character of the great Apostle of the Gentiles than the occurrence recorded ver. 11. &c. wherein, so far from being St. Peter's inferior, as the Judaizing teachers suggested, he appears his faithful and zealous reprover.

1. Peter's fault was, that, at his coming to Antioch, he freely communed with the Gentile Christians, and ate and drank with them, though they were uncircumcised; but, on the arrival of some Jewish brethren sent from James, he temporized, and, for fear of offending the prejudiced Judaizers, to the great discouragement of the Gentile brethren, he suspended his former familiar intercourse with them; and, influenced by him, the Jewish Christians at Antioch dissimulated likewise, and withdrew from free converse, as before, with their Gentile brethren; and, overcome by such bad examples, even Barnabas himself was carried away with their dissimulation, and, contrary to all his former conduct and teaching, joined in this separation; for which St. Peter was most justly to be blamed.

2. The rebuke which St. Paul gave him was such as his dissimulation deserved. And as the offence given was public, publicly and to his face he with noble fidelity withstood him; and, seeing him deviate so much in the present instance from the path of truth, and the liberty of the gospel, he addressed himself to Peter, and said unto him, before them all, *If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, satisfied that the ceremonial law is no longer binding, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews,* and, by the example which thou hast lately shewn, wouldst enslave their consciences to the Mosaical institutions, as if necessary to their acceptance with God? What a glaring contradiction appears between such a conduct and your late avowed principles and practice!

3. He suggests the strongest arguments for the unreasonableness of such a conduct, since all distinction of Jew and Gentile now had ceased. *We who are Jews by nature, God's chosen people, and trained up in the law; and not sinners of the Gentiles, who, in general, are looked upon by the Jews as persons abandoned and reprobate; knowing that a man is not, cannot be, justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ for pardon and acceptance with God, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ,*—through faith in that great atonement which he accomplished for us, and not by the works of the law: and if this was the case with us, must not the Gentiles have recourse to the same free grace? for by the works of the law, moral or ceremonial, shall no flesh be justifi-

fed, none being able to produce an immaculate obedience, adequate to its demands. *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin; who, notwithstanding all that he has done for us, and in us, would, in such a case, leave us under the condemning guilt and prevailing power of sin? God forbid; with abhorrence is the thought to be rejected.* Yet would this be the consequence of seeking to the law for acceptance with God; for if I should build again the things which I destroyed, and, after preaching the grace of the gospel, have recourse to the law for justification before God, *I make myself a transgressor, contradict my own doctrine, and acknowledge myself still under guilt and condemnation, which my faith in Christ has not removed.* So inconsistent was this behaviour, therefore, in St. Peter and his associates.

4. Though some might object to the doctrine of free justification, without the deeds of the law, the Apostle declares his own and every Christian believer's judgment and practice. *For I through the law am dead to the law, renouncing all my expectations from it, that I might live unto God, abiding in a constant state of favour with him, through the Redeemer's infinite merit, and quickened by his grace to newness of life. I am crucified with Christ; the law has no more demands upon me, and worldly interests no power over me: nevertheless I live in a state of reconciliation with God, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness; yet not I, by any inherent power or principle naturally in myself, but Christ liveth in me; I receive from him, as my Head of vital influence, his quickening Spirit: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live not after the flesh, but by the faith of the Son of God, placing my whole dependence upon him, and drawing continual supplies of grace and strength out of his fulness, who loved me, and gave himself for me, to make a complete atonement, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, for me and all who faithfully and perseveringly embrace his great salvation. I do not frustrate the grace of God, and slight, as of no value, the transcendent favour of God's dear Son, and the righteousness unto life which is in him, as they do who go to the works of the law for acceptance with God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain; for in that case righteousness and salvation might have been obtained without him.* Note, (1.) We must renounce all hope of being justified by the law, before we can fly to Jesus, and live unto God. (2.) By faith alone is the life of our souls maintained, while, from the fulness of our Redeemer, we derive the constant supplies of grace and strength. (3.) All who, either in whole or part, place their dependence on their own doings and duties for acceptance with God, make Christ to have died in vain.

CHAP. III.

ST. PAUL, having by many arguments proved himself a real Apostle, and shewed that his knowledge of the Gospel was given him by immediate revelation from Jesus Christ,

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God

¹ Rom. 4. 11—13, 16, 24. & 9. 6—8. Ver. 29. Ch. 4. 28, 31. Mat. 8. 11. John, 8. 39.

^k Rom. 9. 17. Ver. 22. Ch. 4. 30.

Christ, proceeds in this and the following chapters, to treat of the doctrines in dispute between him and the false teachers. They affirmed, that no man could be justified but by the law of Moses, because the pardon of sin could be obtained only by the atonements which it prescribed: and therefore they urged the Gentiles to become Jews, that they might have the benefit of these atonements. But to impress the Galatians the more strongly with a sense of the danger of that doctrine, the Apostle charged them with want of understanding for listening to it; and spake of their not obeying the truth, as if it were the effect of some fascination, ver. 1.—Then, by asking those who had gone over to Judaism, whether they had received the genuine religion which they possessed, as well as the spiritual gifts, by obeying the law, or by obeying the Gospel, he shewed them that obedience to the law of Moses had no part in men's acceptance with God, ver. 2.—and taxed them with folly, because, after having had their acceptance with God, in the Gospel dispensation, through the alone merit of Christ, sealed to them by the graces, gifts, and witness of the Spirit, they proposed to make themselves more acceptable by performing the ceremonies of the law of Moses, which sanctified nothing but the flesh, ver. 3.—Besides, by that course, they rendered all their former sufferings for resisting Judaism of no use, ver. 4.—And to finish his rebuke, he asked them whether he had communicated the spiritual gifts to them, to prove that men are saved through obedience to the law of Moses, or to prove that they are saved through obedience to the Gospel, that is, through the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and by the operations of the Holy Spirit? ver. 5.

In what follows, the Apostle overturned the doctrine of the Judaizers more directly, by observing, that even Abraham himself was justified, not by the works of the law, but in the Gospel method of faith counted for righteousness. And that they who like him believe in God, are Abraham's sons, and entitled to all the blessings of the covenant, ver. 6, 7.—And that God, having determined to justify the nations by faith, preached the Gospel, or good news of his determination, to Abraham, saying, *In thee shall all nations be blessed*, ver. 8.—And therefore in every age and nation, they who believe in God shall be blessed with Abraham, by having their faith counted to them, as his was to him, for righteousness, ver. 9.—Whereas according to the law of Moses itself, every one who seeketh justification meritoriously by the works of that law, most certainly is condemned by its curse, ver. 10.

Farther, to prove that by the law of Moses no man is justified in the sight of God, the Apostle appealed to the Jewish prophets as testifying that doctrine, particularly Habakkuk, ver. 11.—Besides, the law does not require faith, but obedience to its precepts, as the condition of the life which it promises, ver. 12.—Wherefore every sinner being doomed to death by the curse of the law of Moses, no person can be justified by that law. But Christ hath bought us off from the curse of the law of Moses, which is in fact the curse of the law of nature, consequently from law itself as a rule of justification, by dying

for us, ver. 13.—That the blessing of Abraham, the blessing of justification by faith, which, in the covenant with Abraham, God promised to bestow on all nations through his seed, might come upon the Gentiles through Christ Jesus; and that they might receive the promise of the Spirit in all his gifts, graces, and witness, as the seal of their present title to justification by faith, and also of eternal life, if persevering in this faith unto death.

But because the Jews believed, from Isai. ix. 3—5. that the Gentiles were to be converted to them, the Jews contended that the blessing of the nations in Abraham's seed, was to be accomplished by the Gentiles embracing Judaism, and by their receiving justification through the Levitical atonements. Wherefore, to overturn that false notion, the Apostle reasoned in the following manner: even a human covenant is not set aside, or altered, after it is ratified, except by the contracting parties, ver. 15. But the promises of the covenant concerning the counting of the faith of the nations for righteousness, were made not only to Abraham, but to his seed: particularly this promise, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*. He does not say *and in thy seeds*, as speaking concerning a multitude of children, but as concerning one person only; *and in thy seed, who is Christ*, ver. 16.—I therefore affirm that this covenant which was before ratified by God, concerning the blessing of the nations with justification by faith through Christ, in consequence of the promise made to Abraham as a federal head of believers, the law which was given four hundred and thirty years after, cannot annul, so as to abolish the promise, by introducing a method of blessing or justifying the nations, different from that established by the promise, ver. 17.—Farther, if the inheritance be obtained by works of law, it is no longer bestowed by promise; yet God bestowed it on Abraham and his seed, as a free gift by promise, ver. 18.

Ye will perhaps reply, if neither the inheritance, nor justification, is obtained through the works of the law of Moses, why was that law added after the covenant was made with Abraham? It was added for the sake of restraining the Jews from transgressions, and more especially from idolatry; and was to continue till Christ the Seed should come, to whom it was promised, that the nations should be blessed with justification by faith through him. Moreover, the law being added to the covenant for this other purpose, namely, to make the Israelites sensible that they were sinners, and that God was displeased with them, it was delivered by angels into the hand of a Mediator, ver. 19.—For a mediator is not employed between persons in good agreement with one another, ver. 20.—From these things it followed (though the Apostle has not drawn the conclusion,) that a law which was given to make the Israelites sensible that they were sinners, and which by its curse condemned every sinner to death without remedy, could never be intended for their justification. Is the law of Moses then, which makes us sensible of our transgressions, and subjects us to its curse, inconsistent with the promise of justification by faith? By no means. That operation of law, on the contrary, shews the absolute necessity of the promise.

would justify the heathen through faith, saying, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed. preached before the gospel unto Abraham, 9th So then they which be of faith are blessed

Gen. 12. 3. & 18. 18. & 22. 18. & 26. 4. & 28. 14. Pl. 71. 17. Acts, 3. 25. Ver. 7. 8, 14, 29. Rom. 4. 11—16, 24. Gen. 18. 19.

promise. For if any law could have been given capable of delivering us from death temporal and spiritual, certainly righteousness might have been obtained by such a law, ver. 21.—But the law of Moses contained in the scripture, instead of communicating righteousness and eternal life to any person, has shut up all mankind together in prison, as sinners sentenced to death, that the promise of justification now published in the Gospel, may be performed to all believers, ver. 22.—Wherefore before the Gospel was introduced, Jews and Gentiles were imprisoned as condemned criminals, and shut up together under the custody of law, so as to be obliged to have recourse to the method of justification by faith, which at the beginning was but imperfectly discovered, but which was afterwards to be fully revealed to all, in the Gospel, ver. 23.—So that the law was our pedagogue, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, ver. 24. But the method of justification by faith, being now universally made known in the Gospel, Jews and Gentiles are no longer under the pedagogy of the law of Moses, and of nature, ver. 25.—Besides, ye Jews and Gentiles who believe, are all the sons of God and heirs of eternal life through your faith in Jesus Christ. So that to your being the sons of God, it is not necessary to subject yourselves to the law of Moses, ver. 26.—For at your baptism ye professed to put on the temper of Christ, ver. 27.—And where this is really done, there is in the Gospel no preference given to men, as formerly under the law, on account of their descent or their outward condition; but all are equally honourable and equally beloved of God as his sons, who possess the temper and virtues of Christ Jesus, ver. 28.—And with respect to you Gentiles, if ye are Christ's brethren with possessing his temper and virtues, certainly ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs of the heavenly country, according to God's promise, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. *O foolish Galatians,*] By the account that St. Paul has given of himself in the foregoing chapters, the Galatians being furnished with evidence sufficient to clear him in their minds from the report of his preaching circumcision, he comes now, the way being thus opened, directly to oppose their being circumcised, and subjecting themselves to the law. The first argument which he uses is, "That they received the Holy Ghost, and the gift of miracles, by the gospel, and not by the law." ver. 1—5. Instead of *who hath bewitched you?* some would render *εἰς ἑσάς, who hath enchanted you;* and others, *who hath ensnared your lapsings?* The word strongly expresses the unreasonable turn which their minds had taken; so that one would imagine they had been deprived of the regular use even of their natural faculties. *That you should not obey the truth,* means, "That you should not stand fast in the liberty of the gospel." See on ch. ii. 14. St. Paul mentions nothing to them here but Christ crucified; as knowing that, when formerly he had preached Christ crucified to them, he had shewn them that, by his death on the cross, believers were set free from the curse of the law, and the covenant of works was entirely removed, to make way for

that of grace. This we may find him inculcating upon his other Gentile converts, Ephes. ii. 15, 16. Col. ii. 14. 20. and accordingly he tells the Galatians, ch. v. 2. 4. that if, by circumcision, they put themselves under the law, they were fallen from grace, and Christ would profit them nothing at all. There is no room to object here, that what St. Paul urges is merely an argument to the passions; for, in proportion to the affecting sense which they had of the love of Christ, in submitting to crucifixion for them, would be the rational sense of the obligations that they were under to him, to preserve his gospel pure, and his church free and happy. Dr. Heylin renders the last clause, *you,—to whose view the crucifixion of Jesus Christ hath been so lively represented.* And Musculus and Bengelius read, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth crucified among you.*

Ver. 2. *Received ye the Spirit, &c.*] There is no doubt, but that it was on their becoming Christians that they received the Spirit; and therefore that it could not be ascribed to the law, to which they were strangers till afterwards; but must be owing to that faith in which they were instructed by the gospel, on their embracing Christianity. Nor can it justly be objected that they still retained the Christianity by which the Spirit was received; for they were now perverted to a different system by their new teachers; and that which St. Paul had preached at first among them, was a Christianity of which Judaism made no part.

Ver. 3. *Are ye so foolish, &c.*] "Having then set out so happily and hopefully in your Christian course, under the light and influence of the Spirit, with faith in Christ for divine acceptance, according to the tenor of the gospel; how surprisingly stupid and irrational is it for any one of you to imagine that your justification is to be completed by your obedience to the law of Moses, which may be termed *lesh*, in opposition to the gospel, as it is destitute of the Spirit (see 2 Cor. iii. 6—8.); and a man is bound to obey the whole of it by the fleshly ordinance of circumcision (Gal. v. 3.); as its ceremonial rites sanctify only to the purifying of the flesh, (Heb. ix. 13.); and as seeking justification by any works of the law is pleasing to the flesh, is taught by the wisdom of the flesh, and gratifies the pride of corrupt nature, in giving it occasion of assuming glory to itself? (Rom. iv. 2.) But all this is so far from perfecting, that it is directly subversive of the gospel doctrine, in this grand article of it."

Ver. 4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?*] As much persecution might be declined by admitting this mixture of Judaism, there was reason to fear that a regard to their own present ease and convenience led them to it; (comp. ch. v. 11. and vi. 12.) which was, in a manner, cancelling the good effect of their former resolution; and, indeed, any thing which looked like a sinful temporizing, in those who had before been confessors for the truth, might occasion peculiar scandal, and endanger many others.

Ver.

with faithful Abraham.

10 ^a For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, ^b Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But ^c that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is evident*: for, ^d The

just shall live by faith.

12 And ^e the law is not of faith: but ^f The man that doth them shall live in them.

13 ^g Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, ^h Curfed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

^a Pf. 143. 2. Rom. 7. 19, 20, 28. & 9. 30—32. & 4. 14. & 10. 3. Luke, 18. 11—14. ^b Deut. 27. 26. Jer. 17. 3. Ezek. 18. 4. Rom. 3. 19, 23. & 6. 23. ^c Ch. 2. 16. Rom. 3. 20, 28. 1 Kings, 8. 46. Ecclef. 7. 20. Job, 9. 3. & 40. 4. Pf. 143. 2. Jam. 2. 10. & 3. 2. ^d Hab. 2. 4. Rom. 1. 17. Heb. 10. 38. Ch. 2. 19, 20. ^e Rom. 4. 4, 5 & 10. 5, 6. & 11. 6. & 9. 30—32. ^f Lev. 18. 5. Neh. 9. 29. Ezek. 20. 12. Rom. 10. 5, 6. Mat. 19. 17. ^g If. 53. 4—6, 10—12. Jer. 23. 6. Dan. 9. 24, 26. John, 1. 29. & 10. 15. Mat. 20. 28. Rom. 3. 24—26. & 4. 25. & 5. 15—21. & 8. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 5. 21. & 8. 9. Ch. 4. 4, 5. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. & 1. 18, 19. Eph. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 14. Rev. 5. 9. ^h Deut. 21. 23.

Ver. 5. *He that ministereth, &c.*] The person meant here by *he that ministereth*, and ch. i. 6. by *him that called*, is plainly St. Paul himself; though, out of modesty, he declines making use of his own name. It was certainly a great display of the divine wisdom to *suffer* such contentions to arise early in the church, as should make it necessary for the apostles to appeal to the *miracles* wrought before and upon those who were afterwards, in some degree, alienated from them, that future ages might be convinced of the certainty of those miracles, as matters of fact, beyond all possibility of contradiction.

Ver. 6.] St. Paul's next argument against circumcision and subjection to the law is, "That the children of Abraham, intitled to the inheritance and blessing promised to Abraham and his seed, are so by *faith*, and not by being under the law, which brings a curse upon those who are under it," ver. 6—18. Beza is of opinion that the 7th verse should not begin a sentence, but depend on the foregoing, *As Abraham believed,—ver. 7. ye therefore know, &c.*

Ver. 8. *In thee shall all nations be blessed.*] It may perhaps be asked, "What evidence there is that this promise meant the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity, rather than converting the Gentiles to Judaism, and so blessing them with a participation of the privileges originally granted to the natural seed of Abraham?"—But, besides what the Apostle afterwards says for clearing up this point, it may be answered,—that the Mosaic economy was so constituted, that it could never be *universal*; and that when it was considered what sort of a person Christ in fact was, there would appear reason to believe that this promise referred to him, separate from the authority of the Apostle in asserting it, and however dubious soever the sense of the prophecy might appear till it was illustrated by the event. See Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.

Ver. 10. *The works of the law*] *They of faith*, ver. 9. and *they of the works of the law*, are spoken of as two sorts of persons; the one the genuine posterity of Abraham, by faith, and thereby heirs of the promise; the other not. There is also another division in these two verses, of the *blessed*, and those *under the curse*; whereby is meant such as are in a state of life, or acceptance with God, and such as are exposed to his wrath, and to death. See Deut. xxx. 19. Dr. Whitby proves that the law of Adam was attended with a curse, as well as that of Moses; and that it is the

more general curse which is here intended, as illustrated by what Moses expressed as the sanction of his institutions. See Deut. xxvii. 26.

Ver. 11. *The just shall live by faith.*] A dispute arose between St. Paul and the *Judaizing Christians*, concerning what it was which justified a man before God, and entitled him to that eternal life brought to light by the gospel. They held it to be *the works of the law*. St. Paul, on the contrary, affirms, that it was *faith in Jesus the Messiah*: and thus he argues: *But that no man is justified by the law, is evident; for the just shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in them.*—As much as to say, "That no man can obtain life by virtue of the law, is evident from one of your own prophets, Habakkuk, who expressly holds, that *the just shall live by faith*. Now, by the law, no rewards are promised to *faith*, but to *works* only;—*The man that doth, (lays the law, Lev. xviii. 5.) shall live in them.*" See Rom. i. 17. iii. 28. Heb. ii. 4.

Ver. 12. *And the law is not of faith:*] As the Apostle shews here, that there was no obtaining life by the *law*, without an immaculate obedience; *faith*, which is used here in opposition to it, must signify a firm belief of the promise of God, and acting according to it, in a dependence upon Christ only for righteousness and salvation; which is the way of justification and salvation revealed by the gospel.

Ver. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*] The curse of the law, from which Christ hath redeemed us, was that which doomed us to eternal misery; whence it has been justly inferred, that the law of Moses, which is included in this expression, was established on the sanction of future punishments. But, further, it is evident, that the course of the Apostle's argument here implies, that all true believers are redeemed from the curse, and, consequently, that he speaks of a curse to which all, as sinners, were liable: whereas the Gentiles, being under no obligation to the Mosaic law at all, could not possibly be affected directly by its curse, nor could, indeed, be at all affected by it, otherwise than as the word *law* in this place includes the law of nature, or the Adamic law, as well as the Mosaic, as it undoubtedly must. Christ was *made a curse for us*, by enduring the penalty which our sins had deserved; for such was the death which he bore in our stead, not only when considered as a capital punishment, which

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's * covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant,

that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

* Ver. 8. 9. Acts, 1. 29. & 3. 25, 26. If. 32. 15. & 44. 3—5. Jer. 31. 37. & 32. 40. Ezek. 11. 19. & 36. 27. Joel. 2. 28, 29. Zech. 12. 10. Luke 14. 47. Acts, 1. 4. & 2. 37. & 10. 44. & 19. 6. Rom. 6. 16, 19. 1 Cor. 15. 32. Heb. 9. 17. Or testament. Ver. 8. 9. 14. 29. Gen. 17. 7. & 15. 5. & 17. 7. & 21. 12. & 22. 13. Gen. 12. 2. & 15. 18. Heb. 2. 3, 4. Exod. xx—xxxi. Lev. i—xxvii. Gen. 15. 19. Acts, 7. 6. Exod. 12. 40, 41. Rom. 4. 13, 14. Heb. 6. 13—18. Num. 23. 19. Tit. 1. 2. Ch. 2. 21. Ver. 10, 12. Rom. 8. 17. & 4. 13, 14. Heb. 6. 15. Mic. 7. 20. 2 Tim. 1. 9. John, 13. 22. Rom. 11. 15. & 5. 20. & 7. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 9. Acts, 7. 53. Heb. 2. 2. Deu. 33. 2. Deut. 5. 5, 27. John, 1. 17. Acts, 7. 38.

which universally implies something of this kind, but as thus stigmatized by the express declaration of the law, Deut. xxi. 23.

Ver. 14. *That the blessing, &c.*] That the *blessing*, ver. 8, 9, 14. *justification*, ver. 11. and being the *children of God*, ver. 26. are in effect all the same, on the one side; and that *the curse*, ver. 13. is the direct contrary, on the other side, is so plain in St. Paul's discourse here, that nobody who reads it with the least attention can be in any doubt. His argument, to convince the Galatians that they ought not to be circumcised, or to submit to the law, on account of their having received the Spirit from him, that is, by his instrumentality, on embracing the gospel which he preached to them, stands thus: "The blessing promised to Abraham and his seed was wholly upon account of faith, ver. 7. There were not *different seeds* who should inherit the promise,—the one by the works of the law, and the other by faith; for there was but *one seed*, which was *Christ*, (ver. 16.) and those who should claim in and under him by faith. Among these there was no distinction of Jew and Gentile: they, and they only, who believed, were all one and the same true seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, ver. 28, 29. And therefore the promise made to the people of God, of giving them the Spirit under the Gospel was performed only to those who believed in Christ:—a clear evidence that it was not by putting themselves under the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, that they were the people of God, and heirs of the promise." It has been observed, that the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit of God had been so frequently promised by the prophets, as the great blessing of the *latter day*, that it is here used as synonymous to the *blessing of Abraham*. Whence the great importance of the Spirit may be inferred; since the imparting it is represented as the *great blessing* of the gospel dispensation. And hence it follows, that the withdrawing and withholding it, is the *great calamity* which falls upon men by their apostasy from God. Only, it must ever be

remembered, that every good thought, word and work, which has been produced by fallen man, has originated with this same Divine Spirit.

Ver. 16. *He saith not, And to seeds,*] That is, The promises made to Abraham were not appropriated to one line of his descendants,—that is, to those by Isaac; but centred in one illustrious Person, with regard to whom the rest are made partakers of the great blessing exhibited in the Abrahamic covenant, that is to say, all the faithful saints of God.

Ver. 17. *Four hundred and thirty years after,*] The first celebrated promise was made to Abraham when he was 75 years old, Gen. xii. 3, 4. and from this date of it, to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was 100 years old, Gen. xxi. 5. was 25 years. Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, Gen. xxv. 26. Jacob went into Egypt at 130, Gen. xlvii. 9. and the Israelites sojourned there (according to the LXX. Exod. xii. 40.) 215 years; which completes the number. See Acts, vii. 6.

Ver. 19.] In answer to the objection, *To what then serveth the law?* the Apostle shews that the law was not contrary to the promise; but since all men were guilty of transgression, ver. 22. the law was added, to shew the Israelites the fruit and inevitable consequence of their sin, and thereby the necessity of betaking themselves to Christ. But as soon as men had received Christ, they had attained the end of the law of Moses, and therefore should be no longer under it. This is a further argument against circumcision, ver. 19—25.

It was added because of transgressions,] "It was added after the promise to Abraham was made." As the law given by Moses neither did nor could disannul the covenant made with Abraham, to which the Jews undoubtedly had a claim, the design of that law must therefore have been to engage those of his descendants who came under it, to see their need of that covenant, and more effectually to recommend the *promise* to them. And as the writing of the book of Genesis gave them a further

20 ¹ Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 ² Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded ^k all under sin, ¹ that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 ^m But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was ⁿ our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, ^o we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 ^p For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

¹ Job. 9. 33. ² Tim. 2. 5. with Mal. 2. 6. ³ Eccl. 6. 4. ^k Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. & 5. 20. & 11. 32. ^l Pl. 14. 3. ¹ Rom. 5. 21. & 4. 21—26, 24. ^m Ch. 4. 1—3. ⁿ Heb. 7. 19. & 9. 9—11. & 10. 1. ^o Ver. 23. ^p Ch. 4. 1—5. ^q Ver. 14, 17, 18, 29. ^r Ch. 3. 14—17, & 4. 6. ^s Ver. 24. ^t Heb. 7. 19. & 9. 9—11. & 10. 1. ^u Col. 2. 17. ^v Rom. 7. 9. & 10. 4. & 3. 19—31. & 5. 20. 21. ^w Ver. 23, 25. ^x Mat. 5. 17, 18. ^y Acts, 13. 38, 39. ^z Tit. 3. 3—7. ^{aa} Ver. 23. ^{ab} Ch. 4. 1—5. ^{ac} Rom. 6. 14. & 7. 4. & 8. 2. ^{ad} Heb. vii—xi. ^{ae} Pl. 56. 5. ^{af} John, 1. 12. ^{ag} Rom. 8. 15. ^{ah} Ch. 4. 5. ^{ai} 1 Pet. 2. 9. ^{aj} John, 3. 1, 2.

account of it than tradition had preserved, the law might be said to be added to that account, because of transgressions, as their transgressions, not only of the ceremonial, but also of the moral precepts, would appear more exceedingly sinful and dangerous, in proportion to the perspicuity of these precepts, and the awful solemnity with which they were delivered.—That the law was given by the ministration of angels, is apparent from many passages of scripture; (comp. Pl. lxxviii. 17. Acts, vii. 53. and Heb. ii. 2.) though the Logos, or eternal Son of God, did undoubtedly preside among them, and it was in his name that the proclamation was made by the angels, as his heralds and attendants. The mediator here meant was Moses, who was particularly authorized by the Jewish people, as well as constituted by God, to mediate in the affair of receiving the law, which he transacted once for all. See Deut. v. 5. Lev. xxvi. 46. where it is said, that the law was made between God and the children of Israel, by the hand of Moses.

¹ Ver. 20. Now a mediator, &c.] To understand this verse, we must carry in our minds what St. Paul is here doing; and from ver. 17. it is manifest that he is proving that the law could not disannul the promise; and he does it upon this known rule, that a covenant, or promise, once ratified, cannot be altered, or disannulled, by any other, but by both the parties concerned. Now, says he, God is but one of the parties concerned in the promise; the Gentiles and Israelites together made up the other, ver. 14. But Moses, at the giving of the law, was a mediator only between the Israelites and God, and therefore could not transact any thing to the disannulling the promise which was between God and the Israelites and Gentiles together, because God was but one of the parties to that covenant; the other, which was the Gentiles (as well as Israelites), Moses appeared or transacted not for. And so what was done at Mount Sinai, by the mediation of Moses, could not affect a covenant made between parties, whereof one only was there. How necessary it was for St. Paul to add this, we shall see, if we consider that, without it, his argument, of 430 years' distance, would have been deficient, and hardly conclusive. For, if both the parties concerned in the promise had transacted by Moses, the mediator, (as they might, if none but the nation of the Israelites had been concerned in the promise made by God to Abraham), they might, by mutual consent, have altered, or set aside, the former promise, as well four hundred years as four days

after. That which hindered it was, that, at Moses' mediation at Mount Sinai, God, who was but one of the parties to the promise, was present; but the other party, Abraham's seed, consisting of Israelites and Gentiles together, was not there. Moses transacted for the nation of the Israelites alone; the other nations were not concerned in the covenant made at mount Sinai, as they were in the promise made to Abraham and his seed, which, therefore, could not be disannulled without their consent: for that both the promise to Abraham and his seed, as well as the covenant with Israel at mount Sinai, was national, is in itself evident.

¹ Ver. 21. Which could have given life,] Which could have put into a state of life. The word ζωοποιῶσαι signifies, to make alive: St. Paul considers all men here as in a mortal state; and to be put out of that mortal state into a state of life, he calls being made alive. He says the law could not do this, because it could not confer righteousness. By the law, means, by works, or obedience to that law, which tended towards righteousness as well as the promise, but was not able to reach to, or confirm it. See Rom. viii. 3.

² Ver. 22. All] The words τὰ πάντα are used here for all men. In Rom. iii. 9, 19. the Apostle expresses the same thing by πάντας, all men, and πᾶσι ἕξαστας, all the world: but, speaking in the present verse of the Jews in particular, he says we, meaning those of his own nation, as is evident from ver. 24, 25. Hath concluded all under sin, means, "hath ranked them all together, as one guilty race of sinners." See this proved, Rom. i. 18, &c. iii. 9. To the same purpose of putting both Jews and Gentiles into one state, St. Paul uses, Hath shut them up all together, Rom. xi. 32. Some render ver. 23. But before faith came, we were kept shut up under the law, till the future faith should be revealed.

³ Ver. 24. Our school-master] The original does not signify a school-master, but "one who leads or conducts children to school." The ancients generally employed a person for this purpose; and if the Apostle be supposed to allude to this custom, his reasoning will appear exceedingly plain and conclusive. See the next verse, and on Rom. x. 4. and the Introduction to my Commentary on the Old Testament.

⁴ Ver. 26. For ye are all the children of God, &c.] As a further argument to dissuade them from circumcision, St. Paul tells the Galatians, that, by faith, that is, living faith,

27 For ¹ as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male

nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

¹ Rom. 6. 3—5. & 13. 14. Ch. 6. 15. & 5. 6. John, 17. 21.

² Rom. 9. 24. & 3. 29, 30. & 10. 12. Gen. 12. 2. Rom. 9. 7. & 4. 16, 24.

1 Cor. 12. 13. & 7. 19, 24. Eph. 4. 4, 15. & 6. 8. & 2. 14, 15. Col. 3. 11. Heb. 11. 18. Eph. 3. 6. Rom. 8. 17. Rev. 21. 7. 1 Cor. 3. 22.

in Christ, all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are made the children of God; and so they stood in no need of circumcision.

Ver. 27 *Have put on Christ.*] This, at first sight, may seem a very bad metaphor; but if we consider what St. Paul has said, ver. 16. and 26. we shall find it admirably adapted to express his thoughts in few words: He says, ver. 16. that the *Seed* to which the promise was made *was but one, and that one was Christ*; and ver. 26. he declares that *by faith in Christ they all become the sons of God*. To lead them into an easy conception of this, he here tells them, that, by taking on them, sincerely and in faith, the profession of the gospel, they have *put on Christ*: so that to God now looking on them, enjoying this living faith, there appears, as it were, nothing but Christ: that is to say, as long as they preserve this living faith and vital union with Christ, God the Father looks upon them to be as entirely free from guilt and condemnation as if they had been perfectly innocent, and receives them into full acceptance; and all this in and through the Beloved.

Ver. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek,*] That is to say, *nor Gentile*. "All distinctions are now put an end to, by this happy union; all are equally accepted in Christ Jesus; and, being made one body in him, believers, of whatever nation, sex, or condition, are all cemented in the bonds of holy friendship, and animated with the views of the same happiness."

Ver. 29. *And if ye be Christ's, &c.*] That is, if ye are united by faith to *Him*, who is the promised Seed, *then are ye the true seed of Abraham*, and, in consequence of this, heirs according to the promise.

Inferences.—With what gratitude should we reflect that, through the amazing goodness of God, we share in the same great privilege with the Galatians, and *have Jesus Christ crucified evidently set forth amongst us*. Let us make the object familiar to our view, and to our hearts; and may we all feel its powerful influence, to engage us to obey the truth, and to comply with the practical design of the gospel, spite of all the fascinating enchantments of this vain and delusive world! May those especially who have begun in the Spirit, and perhaps have suffered many difficulties already in the cause of religion, be concerned that they may not suffer so many things in vain; and, after all their pretensions and hopes, *make an end in the flesh*, by forsaking that excellent cause!

That we may be deemed the children of Abraham, let us be careful to obtain and cultivate the same faith with him; that so, *believing in God*, as he did, and trusting in the glorious Messiah, we may attain that *righteousness*, which is impossible to attain by the deeds of the law; that

law which insists upon immaculate obedience, and passes sentence upon every one that has transgressed it. Nothing can be more important than to endeavour to impress our souls with this fundamental truth; "That if we are of the works of the law, and trust in these for justification, we are under a curse." O that God may graciously thunder that curse into the ears of sleeping sinners, and make them sensible of their guilt and danger; that, as prisoners of justice, yet in some measure prisoners of hope, they may flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel! Zecl. ix. 12. Heb. vi. 18.

Nor need we go far for help: no sooner are we wounded, as it were, in one verse, than we find provision for our healing in another: for *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law*—and this in a method never sufficiently to be admired; even by making himself a ransom, yea, and becoming a curse for us; submitting, not only to great infamy and wretchedness in his life, but to an ignominious and accursed death, being slain and hanged on a tree, Acts, v. 30. x. 39.

To him let us apply, that the curse may be removed; and, with humble confidence in him, lift up our eyes in cheerful expectation; and, though by birth we are Gentiles, the blessing of Abraham will come upon us, and through faith we shall receive the promise of the Spirit. And what promise can be more valuable than this? what blessing more desirable, than to be enlightened, quickened, sanctified, and comforted by the Spirit of the living God? As the just, may we live by faith; and make it our daily request at the throne of grace, that God will implant and increase that divine principle in our hearts; even such a faith as shall work by love, and prove the genuine basis of sincere and universal obedience.

Rejoicing in those spiritual promises to which all true Christians are now equally intitled, and charging our souls with those obligations which necessarily attend them, let us look upon ourselves as the children of Abraham, as entitled to the noblest of those promises which God made to that excellent saint, even to that great and comprehensive promise, (which is all the salvation and all the desire, of every true child of Abraham,) namely, *that God will be a God unto us*, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. Let us approve ourselves his genuine offspring, by imitating his faith; and always bear in mind, that, having been baptized into Christ, we have so put on Christ, as to be obliged to resemble him in his temper and character.

If we desire to share the blessings and glories of that one body, whereof Christ is the great and glorious head, let us not lay a disproportionate stress upon any thing, by which one Christian may be distinguished from another; but endeavour, as one in Christ Jesus, to be one in affection

CHAP. IV.

We were under the law till Christ came, as the heir is under his guardian till he be of age. But Christ freed us from the law: therefore we are servants no longer to it. He remembereth their good-will to him, and his to them; and sheweth that we are the sons of Abraham by the free-woman.

[Anno Domini 49.]

NOW I say, *that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ser-*

vant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the * elements of the world:

4 But when ^b the fulness of the time was come, ^c God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

* Ch. 3. 7, 29. & 5. 1. Ver 9. Col. 2. 8, 20. Heb. 7. 16, 18, 19. & 9. 9, 10. ^b Or rudiments. ^c Eph. 1. 10. Mark, 1. 15. Dan. 9. 24—26. Psaek 21. 27. Mal. 3. 1. ^d Gen. 3. 15. 1f. 7. 14. & 9. 6. & 4. 2. Jer. 23. 5. & 31. 22. & 33. 15. & 30. 21. Ezek. 34. 29. Mic. 5. 2. Hag. 2. 7. Zech. 3. 8. & 6. 12. & 9. 9. John, 1. 14. & 3. 16. Phil. 2. 7, 8. Mat. 3. 15. & 5. 17. Heb. 2. 14, 16. & 9. 11.

and friendship to each other: and let those who seem to have the greatest advantages, condescend to those who seem most their inferiors.

Giving up all expectations of life from the law, since that of Moses could not give it, let us look for *glory, honour, and immortality* by the gospel; truly thankful for the knowledge we have of *the Mediator of a better covenant* than that in which *Moses* was appointed to mediate. And, as the law was given, not to *disannul the covenant of promise*, but with a view to be subservient to it, and to point out Christ, let us apply to Him for righteousness and life; and in Him—as that one Seed of Abraham, in whom all the families and nations of believers were to be blessed,—let us centre our hopes, and be very solicitous that, by faith, we may be united to him, and so have a claim under him to all the privileges of the *promise*.

Thus let us continue to make use of the law, not as the foundation of our hope towards God, but as our *school-master to bring us to Christ*, by the discovery it has given of our need of him: and being sensible that it has *shut up all under sin*, from which we cannot be delivered but by the *faith* which the gospel has revealed, may we be led so to seek the benefit of the promise, that, being *sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, we may be joyful inheritors of eternal life and blessedness.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. With warm expostulation, and sharp rebuke, the Apostle upbraids the stupidity and folly of these Galatians, who had departed so grievously from the simplicity of the gospel. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, what emissary of Satan, by his craft, has perverted your souls, that ye should not obey the truth, but depart from the grand principles of the gospel, renouncing the doctrine of free justification through the Redeemer's blood?* Several things served to aggravate their folly:

1. The clear display of the truth which had been made to them—*Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, and his death and sufferings, with all the effects and designs of them, represented in such a lively manner, as if he had been crucified among you.*

2. What they had received, under the ministration of the gospel. *This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit, his gifts and graces, by the works of the law, by the ministration of it, or obedience to it, or by the hearing of faith, the preaching of justification through the free grace of a*

Redeemer? They must own that it was through the latter: and therefore most inexcusable was their folly to quit that gospel, the blessed and most happy effects of which they had experienced.

3. *Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* and, forsaking your dependence on the grace of the gospel, do you expect to reach perfection by your obedience to the law of Moses? *Are ye so foolish* as to have recourse to the ministration of death, in order to obtain righteousness unto life?

4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain, for the cause of Christ and the profession of the gospel?* How absurd were it to expose yourselves thus, *if it be yet in vain*, and after all you should apostatize, and lose the blessings of your profession and sufferings? You must then of all men be most foolish and most miserable.

5. *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, as the way of justification, or by the hearing of faith, in the ministry of the gospel?* If these miracles, as was evident, were wrought in confirmation of the doctrines of grace, how preposterously absurd were they to quit the truth confirmed by such divine and incontestable evidence!

2dly, The Apostle, having sharply rebuked the folly of the Galatians in departing from the truth, proceeds to confirm the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, from which they had been seduced. And he proves it,

1. By the example of *Abraham*. He believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness: the Lord Messiah, on whom his faith rested, became the meritorious cause of his acceptance before God. *Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, and place their whole dependence for acceptance with God on the same object, they are the spiritual children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, when neither circumcision was yet instituted, nor the law given, saying, In thee, that is, in thy Seed, the Messiah, shall all nations be blessed, accepted of God in him, and admitted to the participation of all the privileges of God's peculiar people. So then it is hence evident, that they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, without the least respect to the law of Moses.*

2. It is impossible for any man to be justified before God any other way than by faith. *For as many as are of the works of the law, and seek justification on the footing of personal*

5^d To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of f. ns. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath

⁴ Mat. 20. 28. Mark, 10. 45. Acts, 20. 28. Eph. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18—20. & 3. 18. Rev. 5. 9. Ch. 3. 13, 25, 29. Heb. 9. 12. & 1. 10. John, 1. 12. & 3. 1, 2. ⁵ Mat. 7. 11. Lk. 44. 3—5. John, 14. 26. Rom. 8. 9, 15, 26, 27. Zech. 12. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 22. Eph. 1. 13. & 4. 30.

personal righteousness, are, and must be under the curse denounced on every transgressor: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*; the least failure in thought, word, or deed, but once, even in the longest life, effectually cuts off the sinner from all hope by the law, and leaves him under the wrath of an offended God. Therefore Christ, viewing our desperate guilt and hopeless misery, hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by the price of his own blood, being made a curse for us, by divine constitution appointed to be our surety, and bearing, in his own body on the cross, the punishment due to our iniquities: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*. And to this most painful, shameful, and accursed death he submitted, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we, whether Jews or Gentiles, being taken into a state of acceptance with God, might receive the promise of the Spirit, in all his plenitude of gifts, graces, and consolations, through faith in the Redeemer; and not on account of any works of our own, or legal services. Note; (1.) Every man, being unable to yield immaculate obedience to the law, is consequently a transgressor, and sealed up, by nature, under wrath. (2.) Despair is written on every effort of the fallen sinner, made in his own natural strength, to escape from the condemnation under which he lies. (3.) The gospel brings relief to the desperate, by revealing to us a divine Substitute, all-sufficient to bear our sins, and to restore us to the enjoyment of God's forfeited favour. (4.) By persevering faith alone we embrace, and actually possess, all the blessings obtained for us in and by the great Redeemer.

3. The scriptures of the Old Testament are express to the point. *But that no man is justified by the works of the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith*; he only who by faith has laid hold of the great Atonement, can live in a state of favour with God. *And the law is not of faith*: but the way it prescribes for justification is directly opposite, even by immaculate personal obedience; the man that doeth them, and keeps, in spirit and practice, universally and abidingly, all the commands enjoined, shall live in them; but every defect, flaw, or failure, brings down death as the wages of sin. So that the saints of old were justified in the same way as we are, and the gospel was preached to them even as unto us.

4. The stability of the covenant made with Abraham could not be vacated by the law. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men, and use a familiar instance to elucidate the point in hand: though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, and duly signed and sealed, no man disannuleth or addeth thereto, except the parties interested, by mutual consent. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, of justification, adoption, grace, and glory. He saith not to seeds, as of many, as if the promises referred to all his natural, as well as spiritual children, but as of one,

in the singular number; and to thy Seed, which is Christ, through whose merit alone we can be justified, and by whose Spirit alone we can be sanctified. And this I say, as evident, that the covenant which was constituted before, to Abraham, of God in Christ, or with respect to Christ, who was the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect, and introduce another way of justification before God, different from, yea, contrary to, that which God had before established with Abraham. For if the inheritance be of the law, and the title to acceptance with God be obtained by immaculate obedience, it is no more of promise: but God gave it graciously to Abraham by promise, which no subsequent dispensation could set aside; for God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent; and therefore the promise of justification and adoption is in Christ, promised only to those who truly believe in him.

3dly, As to the objections which he knew the Jewish zealots would raise, as if he derogated from the honour of the law, and rendered it useless, he states and answers them.

1. They might say, *Wherefore then serveth the law*, if no creature can be justified or saved by it. I reply, *It was added because of transgressions*, in subservience to the design of the covenant of grace; in order to restrain, by its penalty, and to convince, discover, and condemn the transgressors, shewing them the necessity of a Divine Atonement, till the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made, and who should be the end of the law for righteousness, to every believer; and it was ordained by angels, delivered by their ministry, in the hand of a mediator, even Moses, who was typical of the great Mediator, Jesus Christ. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but stands between the two parties; but God is one; and as the Gentiles were not represented at all at mount Sinai, nor regarded as one of the parties in that covenant, which was a transaction merely between God and Abraham's natural seed, this cannot exclude them from the benefit of the antecedent promise which God made to Abraham and his spiritual seed.

2. Some may hence argue, *Is the law then against the promises of God, made to Abraham and his seed? are they at variance with each other? God forbid*: there is the most perfect harmony between them. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; and could man have yielded, in his own person, an immaculate obedience to the law, his title to life would have been clear, and the promised Substitute had been unnecessary: but the scripture hath concluded all under sin, hath shut up every man, as in a dungeon, under the guilt and condemnation of sin, all having come short of the glory of God; that the promise, by faith, of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe, and that pardon and salvation might come to such, as the free gift of God in him.

sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God

¹ Ver. 5, 6. Ch. 3. 7, 13, 14, 26, 27. Rom. 8. 16, 17. Tit. 3. 7. Jer. 3. 19. R. v. 21. 7. 1 Cor. 3. 22.

him. *But before faith came*, (before Christ, the great object of faith, appeared incarnate, and his gospel was more clearly manifested) *we*, who were under the Mosaic dispensation, *were kept under the law*, as in a castle, separate from other nations, and as captives under a yoke of bondage, *shut up in close custody unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed*, and till Christ, opening to us a door of hope, should bring us from this state of servitude into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster*, and served most directly to bring us unto Christ, *that we might be justified by faith*: the moral precepts and sanction convinced us of our desperate case, as unable to answer the demands of the law, and obnoxious to the curse; the ceremonial institutions led us to look for the divine Substitute, in all the sacrifices which were enjoined for the expiation of sin; and both taught the necessity of justification by faith, through a divine and infinitely meritorious Atonement. *But after that faith is come*, and Christ, the sinner's Substitute, hath appeared, and is held forth to us in the gospel, *we are no longer under a schoolmaster*, being delivered from our former state of minority and legal bondage. *For now ye who believe, are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*, arrived to maturity of age, and entitled to all the blessings of adoption which Jesus hath obtained for all that perseveringly believe in him. *For as many of you*, whether Jews or Gentiles, *as have been baptized into Christ*, by faith really united to him, and by baptism making open profession of him, *have put on Christ*: through him alone they are accepted, and by his Spirit are clothed with the whole panoply of God. *There is now neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female*, all distinctions of nation, sex, condition, are ceased: *for ye, who believe, are all one in Christ Jesus*, united to him in one body, and alike freely partakers of all the privileges contained in the gospel. *And if ye be Christ's*, living members of his body mystical, *then are ye Abraham's Seed*, in a spiritual sense, and heirs according to the promise, entitled to claim, under Christ, your great covenant head, all the blessings which he has purchased by his blood, which will, in due time, be bestowed on all his faithful saints.

CHAP. IV.

THE Apostle having established the joyful doctrine, that believers, in every age and country of the world, are heirs of the promises made to Abraham and to his seed, goes on in this chapter to answer two questions, which he knew would naturally occur to his readers, but which, according to his manner, he does not formally state. The first is, since all believers from the beginning were heirs of the promises, as well as of the things promised, why were they not put in possession of the promises from the beginning, by sending Christ into the world, and introducing the gospel dispensation, in the first age; that the promises, especially the promise of pardon and eternal life through faith, might have been published universally, and preserved

for the benefit of the heirs in every age? The second question is, Why were mankind left for so many ages to the direction of the laws of nature and of Moses (for so the infidel would state his objection), neither of which gave them any hope of pardon and eternal life? - To the first of these questions the Apostle replied, That in not giving the heirs the knowledge of the promises, by introducing the gospel dispensation immediately after the fall, God treated them as a prudent father treats his son, while under age. During his non-age he does not allow him to possess the estate of which he is the heir, because he has not discretion to use it aright; but he keeps him in the condition of a bondman. In the same manner, though believers from the beginning were heirs of the promises, God did not, in the early ages, put them in possession of them, by immediately setting up the gospel dispensation; because, in the first ages, the state of the world did not admit, either of the universal publication of the gospel, or of its preservation, ver. 1.—To the second question, concerning the keeping of the heirs for so many ages under the tuition of the laws of nature and of Moses, the Apostle's answer implies, that, as the heir of a great estate must be prepared by a proper education for enjoying it with dignity, and is therefore, in his childhood, placed under tutors who protect and instruct him, and stewards who manage his estate, and supply him with necessaries, till the time appointed in his father's will for taking possession of his inheritance, ver. 2.—so, to prepare believers for the actual inheritance of the promises under the gospel dispensation, God judged it proper to continue them for a long time under the bondage of the laws of nature and of Moses, or rather, as a Christian would express it, *under the Adamic law*, &c.—a law accompanied with such offers of grace and influences of the Spirit, as would bring every sincere soul to glory, through the infinite and alone merits of the great Redeemer of mankind, that, by experiencing the hardships of that bondage, they might be the more sensible of the happiness which they were to derive from the liberty of the gospel, ver. 3. Only it must be added, that the Adamic law, as well as the law of Moses, could do nothing of itself, without grace, but make sin exceeding sinful.

More particularly, it was not fit that a complete discovery of the method of salvation should be made to all mankind by the publication of the promises in the gospel, till they were made sensible of the utter insufficiency of their own natural powers for discovering an effectual method of reconciling themselves to God. But so perfectly ineffectual is the mere reason of fallen man to guide us to life eternal, that, though a sufficiency of grace for salvation was offered to mankind under the darkest dispensations, the generality of the world had lost even the imperfect knowledge of the method of salvation which God had revealed to their first parents after the fall; notwithstanding, to preserve that knowledge, God appointed the sacrifices of beasts, as an emblem of that effectual sacrifice which the Seed of the woman was to offer in due time.

through Christ.

8 Howbeit then, ² when ye knew not God,

ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

¹ Act. 17. 23 & 14. 15, 16. Rom. 1. 23, 25. Eph. 2. 11, 12. 1 Cor. 12. 2. 1 Thel. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 4. 3.

time. For mankind, not preserving the true meaning of these sacrifices, believed them to be real atonements; and in that persuasion multiplying them without end, they foolishly expected to be pardoned, through the number and costliness of the animal sacrifices which they offered. In this state of the world, God thought fit to introduce the law of Moses, in which the same sacrifices of beasts were appointed; not however as real atonements for sin, but expressly as types of the real Atonement which God had promised should be made; that, by bringing back the rite of sacrifice to its original intendment, and by reviving the expectation of a real atonement, mankind might be made sensible that it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin. This important truth was still more directly shewn in those precepts of the law of Moses which ordered the same sacrifices to be often offered for the same persons. For, as the Apostle justly argues, Heb. x. 2. if these sacrifices had been real atonements, being once offered, there would have been no need to have repeated them. Thus the Levitical sacrifices, by reviving the expectation of a real atonement to be made in due time, and by shewing the utter inefficacy of the sacrifices of beasts to procure the pardon of sin, led the Jews to the sacrifice of Christ, the only real atonement; so that, as the Apostle affirms, Gal. iii. 24. the law of Moses, by its sacrifices, as well as by its curse, was a schoolmaster to lead the Jews to Christ.—Wherefore, when the heathens, under the tuition of the Adamic law, accompanied with divine grace, without which it could work nothing but death, were made sensible of the insufficiency of their own natural powers to discover any effectual method of obtaining pardon; and when the Jews, by the law of Moses, were shewn that it was not possible for the sacrifices of beasts to take away sin, and when the political state of the world admitted the gospel to be preached to all nations, and preserved when preached,—then was *the fulness of the time*, or the proper season for God's sending forth his Son into the world, born of a woman, descended from Abraham, to make a complete discovery of the method of salvation by the gospel revelation, ver. 4.—And by offering himself a sacrifice for sin to redeem believers, the heirs of the promises, from the tuition both of the Adamic law and of the law of Moses; and to place them under the gospel dispensation, that they may receive the adoption of sons; that is, all the privileges which belong to *the sons*, or heirs of God.

Next, in regard that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, are the sons of God, and heirs of the promises, the Apostle addressed both, saying, Wherefore, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, the Holy Spirit, whose gifts, graces, and witness, are evidences of your sonship, and embolden you to address God by the endearing appellation of *Father*, ver. 6. Thou then who possessest the graces and witness of the Spirit, whether thou be'st a Jew or a Gentile, art no longer a *bond-man*, under the tuition of the law, either the Adamic or that of Moses, but a son; and if a

son, then an heir of God, an heir of all the promises of God, through the atonement which Christ has made for thee, ver. 7.—However, ye Gentiles ought to remember, that in your heathen state, being ignorant of the true God, ye worshipped, with a slavish subjection, things which are no gods, ver. 8.—But now, having acknowledged the true God as your Father, or, to express it better, being acknowledged by the true God as his sons, ye worship him acceptably with spiritual services. And being in this happy state, why do ye, by embracing Judaism, return to the same kind of bodily unprofitable worship, by sacrifices, washings, and ho'y days, which ye practised in heathenism? ver. 9.—I am told that ye observe the days, and new moons, and seasons, and years enjoined in the law of Moses; which kind of worship, though different in respect of its object, is in its nature the same with the worship that ye formerly paid to your idols, and has the same tendency to beget in you a superstitious, slavish, disposition. These observances, I know, ye have been made to believe are necessary to your salvation: but I assure you that they are utterly ineffectual for that purpose, ver. 10.—I am afraid I have laboured in vain among you, ver. 11. Lest, however, this rebuke might have offended the Galatians, he assured them that it proceeded from love; and desired the continuance of their affection, which, when he first preached to them, had been very great, ver. 12—20.

The Apostle next turned his discourse to the false teachers, and asked them and their disciples, who wished to be under the law of Moses as the rule of their justification, why they did not understand the law? He meant the writings of Moses, which, when rightly interpreted, taught the freedom of Abraham's seed, by faith, from the bondage of the law, ver. 21.—To prove this, the Apostle, entering into the deep meaning of the things which Moses has written concerning Abraham, observed that Abraham, as the father of the people of God, had two sons, the one by the bond-maid, Hagar, the other by the free-woman, Sarah, ver. 22.—But the one by the bond-maid was begotten by the natural strength of his parents; but the son, who was born of the free-woman, was begotten supernaturally, through the strength communicated to his parents by the promise, ver. 23.—These things the Apostle told the Galatians were an allegory: for these mothers represent the two covenants, by which men are made the church and people of God. The one covenant is that of *the law* given from mount Sinai, whereby the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh were made the visible church and people of God; and which bringeth forth all its children in bondage to the law. This covenant is represented by Hagar, ver. 24.—Wherefore her son Ishmael, whom she brought forth in bondage, was a type of the then present Jerusalem, or visible Jewish church, consisting of Abraham's natural descendants by Isaac; who are all in bondage to the law; and who, if they have no relation to Abraham but by natural descent, and to God but by living in his visible church, will be excluded from the inheritance of

9 But now, ^a after that ye have known God, again ^{*} to the weak and beggarly † elements, or rather are known of God, how turn ye whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ?

^a John. 10. 3, 4, 14. 1 Cor. 8. 3. * 13. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Phil. 3. 7—11.

* Or back.

† Or rudiments.

Ver. 3. Heb. 7. 18. &

of heaven, as Ishmael was from the earthly inheritance, on account of his being brought forth in bondage. Hagar and her son Ishmael are likewise types of those who, under the gospel dispensation, are members of God's visible church, merely by being born of parents who are members of that church, and who are in bondage to their lusts: for they likewise will be excluded from the inheritance of heaven, ver. 25.—The other covenant is that of *the gospel*, which was published from Mount Zion, Isa. ii. 3. whereby believers, Abraham's children by faith, are made citizens of the Jerusalem above; that is, members of God's invisible, universal church, whose most perfect state will be in heaven. This covenant is fitly typified by Sarah, the free-woman, who was constituted by God the mother of all believers. And her son Isaac, who was born in freedom, is an apt type of Abraham's children by faith, who, being regenerated by God, are born in freedom from the bondage of the law, and from the slavery of sin; and are the universal invisible church of God, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, ver. 26.

The foregoing account of Abraham's wives and sons, and of the persons and things typified by them, the Apostle told the Galatians, was confirmed by Isaiah, who foretold the conversion of the Gentiles, under the idea of their becoming *Sarah's children* by faith, in these words: *Rejoice, O barren woman, &c.* ver. 27.

Having thus established his allegorical interpretation of the history of Abraham's wives and sons, he drew therefrom the following conclusion, concerning believers of all nations: *we, brethren, after the manner of Isaac, are the children begotten to Abraham, by God's promise, "a father of many nations I have constituted thee," and are the persons typified by Isaac, ver. 28.—But, says the Apostle, As then Ishmael, who was begotten according to the flesh, persecuted Isaac, who was begotten according to the Spirit, by mocking him, and by insisting that he should be excluded from the inheritance, because he was the younger son; so it hath happened now. The Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, persecute us believers in Christ, who are Abraham's spiritual seed, and endeavour to exclude us from the inheritance, because they were made the church and people of God before us, ver. 29.—But what (says the scripture) happened on that occasion? why, that God ordered Abraham to cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not inherit with the son of the free-woman; thereby declaring, that those who are the people of God only by natural descent and outward profession, shall not inherit heaven, ver. 30.—Thus, brethren, it appears from the law itself, that the births of Ishmael and Isaac were ordered in such a manner, as to shew that believers of all nations are the children of Abraham, not by the bond-woman, indeed, but by the free; consequently, that they are the heirs of the promises, and of the heavenly country, although they are not in bondage to the law of Moses, ver. 31.*

Ver. 1. Now I say, that the heir, &c.] The Apostle goes on further to prove, that the law was not against the promise, in that the child is not disinherited by being under tutors: But his chief design is, to shew that, though both Jews and Gentiles were intended to be the children of God, and heirs of the promise by faith in Christ, yet they both of them were left in bondage, till Christ, in due time, came to redeem them both; and therefore it was folly in the Galatians, being redeemed from one bondage, to go backwards, and put themselves again into a state of bondage, though under a new master.

The word *Δουλος* signifies properly, and should be rendered, *bondman*, or *bond-servant*; and unless it be so translated, ver. 1, 7, 8. *bondage* in ver. 3, 9. will scarcely be understood by an English reader; but St. Paul's sense will be lost to a person who, by *servant*, understands not one in a state of *bondage*. Bengelius thinks, that this should connect with what precedes, and not begin a new chapter:—*what I mean is, that as long as, &c.*

Ver. 3. Even so we,] It is plain that St. Paul speaks here in the name of the *Jews* or *Jewish church*, which, though God's peculiar people, yet was to pass a *nouage*,—so St. Paul calls it,—under the restraint and tutelage of the law; and not to receive the possession of the promised inheritance till Christ came.

Ver. 4, 5. God sent forth his son,] These verses should be read and understood thus: *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, (made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law) that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Ver. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit, &c.] St. Paul uses the same argument of proving their sonship from having the Spirit, Rom. viii. 16. And he that will read 2 Cor. iv. 17. to v. 6. and Ephes. i. 11—14. will find, that the Spirit is looked upon as the seal and assurance of the inheritance of life to those who have received the adoption of sons, as St. Paul speaks here, ver. 5. The force of the argument seems to lie in this, that as he who has the *spirit of a man* in him, has an evidence that he is the son of *man*; so he that hath the *Spirit of God* has thereby an assurance that he is the Son of *God*. It was not allowed to slaves among the Jews to use the title of *abba, father*, in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *imma, mother*, when speaking to the mistress of it.

Ver. 7. And if a son, then an heir, &c.] From the Galatians having received the Spirit, as appears ch. iii. 2. St. Paul argues, that they are the *Sons of God* without the law; consequently, *heirs* of the *promise* without the law: "For," says he, ver. 1—6. the Jews themselves were obliged "to be redeemed from the bondage of the law by Jesus Christ, that as sons they might attain to the inheritance; "but you, Galatians, (he goes on,) have, by the Spirit "which is given you through the ministry of the gospel, "an evidence that God is your Father; and being *sons*, "are free from the bondage of the law, and *heirs* without "it."

10 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 ^k I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, ^l be as I am; for I am as ye are: ^m ye have not injured me at all.

13 Ye know how ⁿ through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And ^o my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; ^p but

received me as an angel of God, *even as* Christ Jesus.

15 ^{*} Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bare you record, ^q that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 'Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

17 'They zealously affect you, *but not well*; yea, they would exclude [†] you, that ye might affect them.

^l Rom. 16. 5. Col. 2. 16. Lev. xxiii. xxv. Num. xxviii. xxix. ^k 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3. Acts, 16. 6. Ch. 2. 2. & 5. 2, 4. 1 Thes. 3. 5. ¹ Gen. 34. 15. Phil. 3. 7, 8. Ch. 6. 4. ^m 2 Cor. 2. 5. Ver. 16. ⁿ 1 Cor. 2. 3. 2 Cor. 12. 7, & 11. 6, 30. & 10. 10. 1 Thes. 2. 2. ^o Acts, 30. 19. Jam. 1. 2. Rom. 12. 15. Heb. 13. 3. See ver. 13. ^p Gen. 18. 2, 3. & 19. 1, 2. Mal. 2. 7. Zech. 12. 8. Mat. 10. 40. Joh. 13. 20. 1 Thes. 2. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 20. ^q Or *what was then*. ^r Ver. 14. 1 Thes. 5. 13. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Tim. 5. 17. [†] 1 Kings, 21. 20. & 22. 8. Prov. 27. 5. Pf. 141. 5. Ch. 3. 1—4. & 2. 14. Ver. 9—11. Ch. 5. 1—9. ¹ Rom. 10. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Ch. 6. 12. Phil. 2. 21. [†] Or *us*.

“it.” St. Paul uses the same sort of reasoning to the Romans, ch. viii. 14—17.

Ver. 8. *Ye did service unto them, &c.*] *Ye were in bondage unto those which, &c.* See on ver. 1. It is evident here, that though these Christians had, before their conversion, been idolatrous Gentiles, the Judaizing teachers were desirous of subjecting them to the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies.

Ver. 9. *Are known of God,*] Or, *are approved of God.* The Apostle having said, *ye have known God*, he subjoins, *or rather are known of him*, in the Hebrew latitude of the word *known*; in which language it sometimes signifies, “knowing with choice and approbation.” See Amos, iii. 2. 1 Cor. viii. 3. The law is here called *weak*, because it was not able to deliver a man from bondage and death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and it is called *beggarly*, or *poor*, because it kept men in the poor estate of pupils, from the full possession and enjoyment of the inheritance, ver. 1—3. The Apostle makes it matter of astonishment how they who had been in bondage to false gods, having been once set free, could endure the thoughts of parting with their liberty; of returning into any sort of bondage again; much more to a bondage under the weak and wretched external institutions of the Mosaic law, which was not able to make them *sons*, and instate them in the inheritance. For in ver. 7. he expressly opposes *bondage* to *sonship*.

The word Παλιον, *again*, evidently refers here, not to elements which the Galatians had never been under hitherto, but to *bondage*, which he tells them, ver. 8. they had been in to false gods.

Ver. 11. *I am afraid of you, &c.*] There was the greater reason for this apprehension, as the fixing the time for the Jewish feasts depended upon the great Sanhedrim; so that their observing them would bring them into such an intercourse with, and dependence upon that court, as might be greatly to the hazard of their Christianity.

Ver. 12. *For I am as ye are*] the original words κ^εγω ε^σμαι ο^μωσ^{τε}ς υ^μιν are ambiguous, and may either signify, *I am*, or *I have been, as ye are*. Our translation takes them in the

former sense, and so they must express his unanimity with them in love; which he urges as an argument for their unanimity with him, and affection to him; and this certainly very well suits the connection with the subsequent part of the verse. The latter sense, however, seems preferable, as more weighty, copious, and striking, and, perhaps, more natural too: for it is certain that many of them were much prejudiced against him, while he was most tenderly affected towards them. See ver. 16. ch. 1. 6.

Ver. 14. *My temptation which was in my flesh*] What this weakness and trial in the flesh was, says Mr. Locke, since it has not pleased the Apostle to mention, it is impossible for us to know; but it may be remarked here, as an instance, once for all, of the unavoidable obscurity of some passages in epistolary writings, without any fault in the author; for some things necessary to the understanding of what is written are usually of course and justly omitted, because already known by the person, or persons, to whom the letter is written; and it would be often superfluous, and sometimes very ungraceful, particularly to mention them. We may, however, just observe, that this seems to be the same as the *infirmity of the flesh*, ver. 13. and it is very probably supposed by many to be what he speaks of 2 Cor. xii. 7. See also 2 Cor. x. 10. But we must once more add, that St. Paul, as well as all the other writers of the bible, was, while writing, under the infallible direction of the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 15. *Where is then the blessedness, &c.*] *What benedictions did you then pour out upon me!* Locke; who observes, that the context makes this sense of the words so necessary and visible, that it is to be wondered how any one could overlook it. Several commentators, however, do not agree with Mr. Locke; but think that by *blessedness* here we are to understand the sense which they had of their own happiness, in being enlightened by St. Paul in the knowledge of the gospel. See Rom. iv. 6, 9.

Ver. 17. *They would exclude you.*] Some copies and several expositors read *us*, which certainly appears more natural and easy; and, as there is no doubt but that the Apostle

18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good *thing*, and not only when I am present with you.

19 My little children, of whom I ^a travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

20 I ^x desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for ^y I stand in doubt of you.

21 Tell me, ye ^z that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, ^a that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman.

23 ^b But he *who was* of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promise.

24 Which things are ^c an allegory: for these are the two ^d covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, ^e which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

^a Ch. 1. 6. & 3. 1. 1 Cor. 4. 15. & 3. 5, 10. Philem. 10. Jam. 1. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 23. Col. 1. 27. ^b 1 Cor. 2. 2—5. 2 Cor. 11. 28, 29. Col. 2. 1. & 1. 9—11, 28, 29. ^c R. m. 1. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 4. 19, 21. 2 Thes. 2. 17, 18. ^d Or I am perplexed for you. Ver. 11. ^e Rom. 9. 3—12. & 10. 2, 3. Ver. 9. Mat. 22. 29. Heb. 5. 11, 12. ^f Gen. 16. 15. & 21. 1, 2. Acts, 7. 8. Heb. 15. 11. ^g Gen. 16. 4. & 17. 6. 16. & 18, 10, 14. Rom. 9. 6, 7. John, 8. 39. ^h Hof. 12. 10. Ezek. xv. xvi. xix. xxiii. xxxvii. Mat. xiii. Luke, xv. xvi. ⁱ Or testaments. Heb. 8. 7, 8. & 9. 15—17. ^j Ch. 5. 1. Rom. 8. 15. Acts, 15. 10. Heb. 2. 15.

Apostle refers here to the endeavours used by the false teachers to alienate their affections from him, it may induce us to prefer this reading:—which is put by the translators of our bible in the margin.

Ver. 18. In a good thing,] That by the word *καλῶ* here, he means a *person* and *himself*, the scope of the context evinces. In the preceding verses he speaks only of himself, and the change of their affection to him since he left them. There is no other thing mentioned as peculiarly deserving their affection, to which the rule given in this verse could refer. He had said, ver. 17. *they affect you, and that you may affect them.* This is only of persons, and therefore the words *ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῶ*, which immediately follow, may best be understood of a *person*; else the following part of the verse, though joined by the copulative *and*, will make but a broken sense with the preceding. But there can be nothing more coherent than this, which seems to be St. Paul's sense: "You were very affectionate to me when I was with you; you are since estranged from me. It is the artifice of the seducers, who have cooled you to me; but if I am the *good man* you took me to be, you will do well to *continue* the warmth of your affection to me when I am absent, and not to be well affected towards me only when present among you." Though this be his meaning, yet the way that he has taken to express it is much more elegant, modest, and graceful. Let any one read the original, and he will be fully satisfied that it is so. Some connect this with the following verse, thus:—*and not only when I am present with you, my little children, of whom, &c. until Christ be formed in you: ver. 20. But I desire, &c.*

Ver. 20. And to change my voice;] This seems to signify the speaking higher, or lower, changing the tone of the voice suitably to the matter delivered, whether it be advice, commendation, or reproof; for each of these have their distinct *voices*. St. Paul wishes himself with them, that he might accommodate himself to their present condition and circumstances. Dr. Heylin, however, understands it differently, and translates, *that I might address you in another manner, (vivâ voce) for I am in great perplexity upon your account.*

Ver. 21.] The Apostle exhorts the Galatians to *stand*

fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made them free; shewing those who are so zealous for the law, that if they mind what they read in the law, they will there find that the *children of the promise*, or of the *new Jerusalem*, were to be *free*; but the children after the *flesh*, of the earthly Jerusalem, were to be *in bondage*, to be cast out, and not to have the inheritance.

Ver. 24. Which things are an allegory:] The original may be rendered, *Which things are allegorical, or have been allegorized.* It seems to have been in compliance with the disposition of the Jewish Christians, who were fond of allegoric interpretations, that St. Paul, above all the other apostles, used that way. He seems to intimate as much, when, upon the allegory of Abraham's two sons, he argues for the discharge of the believing Gentiles from the legal rites. He had, in his former chapter, offered them several good reasons in proof of their liberty, before he comes to this, which he introduces with the preface, "My little children, &c." ver. 19, 20. He goes on, "I will try what an allegory will do. Tell me, you who desire, &c." St. Paul had no intention to prove by this allegory the truth of Christianity to the unbelieving Jews; but to shew the Christian exemption from Jewish rites, to Jews who professed themselves Christians. To such persons his arguments, built upon this passage in Moses's writings, were very convincing, because they against whom he disputed approved of this sort of reasoning upon scripture history, and admitted the general principles upon which this and other allegorical principles were built. They had learned, that all things happened to their fathers in a figure, and that things in the law included a mystery relating to future times. And when an exact coincidence of all the circumstances in the history, and some after-event, was made out, it was to *them* a strong argument, because it suited their genius, and was a method of proof to which they had been accustomed. In Philo, we see this history allegorized to a moral sense; *Sarah* being put for *virtue* by that author, in his book of allegories: and *Agar*, for that *knowledge of the sciences* which ought to be subservient to virtue, or else to be expelled: and who can say that this history was not allegorized by others in St. Paul's sense, especially as there is an obvious analogy between the *family of Abraham*, the father

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and * answereth to Jerusalem † which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But ‡ Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, † Rejoice, *thou* barren that barest not; break forth and cry, *thou* that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are

† the children of promise.

29 † But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? † Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.

31 So then, brethren, † we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

* Or *in the same rank with.* † Luke, 19, 41—44. & 21, 24. Rom. 9, 30—32. & 10, 2, 3. & 11, 7—11. ‡ If. 2, 2. Heb. 12, 22. Rev. 3, 12. & 21, 2, 10. Phil. 3, 20. John, 8, 36. Rom. 8, 1, 2. & 6, 14, 18. & 7, 4. Eph. 2, 15. 2 Tim. 1, 7. Ch. 5, 1. Pl. 87, 4, 5. † If. 54, 1—5. Mal. 3, 11, 12. Rev. 7, 4, 6. Gen. 49, 10. † Rom. 9, 8. & 4, 13, 16, 17. Ch. 3, 7, 9, 26, 29. Acts, 3, 25. † Gen. 27, 9. Job, 19, 28. Mat. 23, 33, 37. Acts, iv—viii. xii—xiv. xvii. xviii. xxi—xxv. 1 Thest. 2, 14, 15. Heb. 10, 33—34. Ch. 5, 11. & 6, 12—14. † Gen. 21, 10, 12. John, 8, 35. Mat. 8, 11, 12. Rom. 11, 7. Ch. 3, 8, 22. Ezek. 36, 17. † Rom. 8, 1, 2, 15. 2 Tim. 1, 7. Heb. 2, 14, 15. John, 8, 36. Ch. 3, 29. & 5, 13. 1 John, 3, 1, 2. John, 1, 12, 13. 1 Pet. 1, 2—4, 23.

father of the faithful, and the church of the faithful; which St. Paul might improve, in comparing all the parts of that history with the state of the present Christian and Jewish church, to accommodate the whole to the subject of their controversy. Be this as it may, the Galatians could not mistake him, as if he was about to impose a false sense of the law upon them, after he had forewarned them in what sense he interpreted that history. He does not give the least intimation that the words in Genesis *literally* signified the two covenants: on the contrary, he tells them, *these things being allegorized*, have this sense. And if they were allegorized, then they were transferred from their genuine signification to other things illustrated in the figure. The history did not predict, but *figured* the other by unforced accommodation.

These are the two covenants.] That is, These two persons, Hagar and Sarah, may well be considered as representing the two covenants, or dispensations, of the law and the gospel. This Hagar, I say, (ver. 25.) whose name signifies a *stranger*, is a representation of those who are under the law, given from mount Sinai in Arabia, in the deserts of which the Hagarenes, who descended from Ishmael, were settled: and it answers in the allegory to the present state of the earthly Jerusalem, which, with her children, is in bondage under the law. The particle *ἡ* cannot have its *illative* force in ver. 25. since it would be very injurious to the Apostle to suppose that he meant to argue thus: "Mount Sinai is Agar; for this Agar is mount Sinai." It must therefore signify the same with *I say*, and only introduce the repetition of a thought which the Apostle was desirous to inculcate; as it often does elsewhere.

Ver. 26. *Jerusalem which is above,*] Under the name of Jerusalem is understood the gospel covenant, as will appear from the very etymology of the word; which signifies, the *spring or possessor of peace, or the peace-maker*—a name highly applicable to the covenant of the Messiah, who is styled, "The Prince of Salem, or, of Peace." The Apostle here refers to the free genius of Christianity, which, when compared with Judaism, made it evidently fit, in the illustration of this allegory, to consider the *free-woman*, that is, Sarah, as representing the church under this nobler form. The temple of God and the new Jerusalem, under the Christian

dispensation, is the whole collective body, the universal church, consisting of converts from Jews and Gentiles.

Ver. 29. *Born after the flesh*] That is, *Ishmael*; in whose birth there was nothing beyond the common course of nature. He that was *born after the Spirit* is *Isaac*; who was produced as the spiritual seed, by the especial energy of God's miraculous power. See Gen. xxi. 3. 2 Cor. x, 3.—*Even so is it now*: that is, "So the carnal Jews, who are the seed of Abraham after the flesh, abuse and persecute us Christians, who are Abraham's seed after the spirit, because we will not conform to the observance of legal ceremonies." The expressions, *born after the flesh*, and *born after the Spirit*, have, in their original brevity with regard to the whole view wherein St. Paul uses them; an admirable beauty and force.

Ver. 31. *So then, brethren,*] The Apostle, by this allegorical history, shews the Galatians that they who are sons of Agar, that is to say, under the law given at mount Sinai, are in bondage; the peculiar inheritance being designed for those only who are the free-born sons of God, under the spiritual covenant of the gospel. And thereupon he exhorts them in the following words, to preserve themselves in that state of freedom; for the exhortation in ver. 1. of the following chapter is so evidently grounded on what the Apostle has been saying here, that it should, by all means, be connected with it. It is made the close of this chapter in three of Stephens's copies; which seems to be much more proper than to make it the beginning of another. We shall subjoin here a few observations on this chapter, particularly on ver. 4.—to prove that the time when Christianity was made known, was the fittest period possible,—by way of

Inferences.—The goodness of God is not only eminently displayed in the great and signal blessings which he has conferred on mankind; but it may appear likewise in the very time fixed upon for bestowing his favours. We all know, from our own experience, that the deferring a benefit frequently enhances the value of it, and, of consequence, heightens our obligation to the benefactor. This reasoning may well be applied to the argument now under consideration.

CHAP. V.

He moveth them to persist in their liberty, and not to observe circumcision; but love, which is the sum of the law. He reckoneth up the works of the flesh, and the fruits of the Spirit; and exhorteth to walk in the Spirit.

[Anno Domini 49.]

STAND ^a fast therefore in the ^b liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,

and ^c be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that ^d if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I ^e testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he ^f is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 ^g Christ is become of no effect unto you,

^a Prov. 23. 23. Jude, 1. 1 Cor. 16. 13. & 17. 58. Heb. 3. 6, 14. & 4. 14. & 10. 23. ^b John, 8. 32, 36. Rom. 6. 14, 18. & 7. 7. 1 Cor. 8. 9. & 9. 19. Ch. 3. 7, 13, 25, 26. & 4. 5, 26, 28, 31. & 2. 4. If. 9. 2, 4. ^c Ch. 4. 9, 21. Acts, 15. 10. Mat. 23. 4, 8. Heb. 8. 8—1. Col. 2. 16—22. 2 Pet. 2. 19, 20. ^d Acts, 15. 1. 24. Ch. 2. 3—5. Rom. 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3. ^e Acts, 20. 21, 24. Neh. 9. 25. 1 Thes. 4. 6. Eph. 4. 17. ^f Ch. 3. 10. Rom. 9. 31. ^g Ch. 2. 21. Rom. 4. 4. 5. & 7. 2, 4 & 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3. Heb. 12. 15—17. & 10. 38.

Captious men have been apt to abound in vain inquiries; and, among others of a like nature, to ask this question;—“Why the Christian revelation, if it be really divine, was not communicated sooner?” To which St. Paul has plainly intimated, in the words before us, this solid and sufficient answer. “That the preceding ages of the world were not so proper for it; for, *in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son*: that is, at the time prescribed and pointed out in the ancient prophecies; not from mere arbitrary pleasure, but because it was in itself the fittest.”

Indeed, if the introduction of the Christian dispensation into the world, immediately after the fall, were *absolutely necessary*, in the nature of the thing itself, to enable mankind to know, experience, and practise what it is their indispensable duty to know, experience, and practise, for eternal salvation, we should have had reason to conclude that it must have subsisted from the beginning, or as soon as this *necessity* commenced; and not have been delayed in the manner it was. But this is not the just state of the case; because the infinitely wise and righteous Governor of the world can require nothing of his creatures but what he has given them, or offered to them, a capacity and power to perform: the natural consequence of which is, that every man answers the end of that particular station wherein he is placed, who receives and uses the grace offered to him, and accordingly acts up to the light and advantages which he enjoys, whatever they are; though, in point of merit, he can be accepted of God only through the great atonement of the Son of his love, who was *the Lamb slain in promise from the foundation of the world*.

The fixing, therefore, of the times of the different dispensations, had no regard to equity, but solely to the Divine wisdom and goodness; so that, whatever time was judged most proper in the Divine Mind for the introduction of the gospel dispensation, or for the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, and the mission of the Holy Ghost, *that was*, without doubt, the most expedient and seasonable for the introduction or promulgation of it*. We proceed, therefore, to shew,—“That the *time* mentioned by St. Paul was the fittest period for *infinite Wisdom to fix upon*, because it was most proper

* I am conscious that the omnipotence of God could make all circumstances submit to his pleasure. But we are not to judge in these cases from what he could, but from what he is pleased to do.

“for the propagation of Christianity; and that for two reasons of incontestible weight: *first*, that it could be *more* easily spread from one nation to another; and, *secondly*, that it might make a larger and more extensive progress.”

To this end it is proper to remember, that the greatest part of the known world was now united in one empire, under the Roman power; so that the intercourse between mankind was more universal, and travelling to remote nations more easy and commodious than it had ever been, under any other of the great monarchies. In this period likewise the world enjoyed a degree of *peace* and tranquillity, for a long while before unknown; which was another very favourable circumstance for the propagation and settlement of the gospel:—for, amid the horrors and desolations of *war*, the minds of men are distracted, and their thoughts fluctuating and confused. The general attention is engaged by victories and triumphs, or by scenes of devastation and ruin. The fate of nations is the point to be decided: the principal question depending, which employs speculations and inquiries, hopes and fears, is, “which shall be established—*liberty* or *servitude*.” And it is not to be expected, considering the depravity of mankind, that the generality will be sedate enough to examine and pursue truth as they ought, with disorder and confusion all around them. The preachers of *new doctrines* must then especially be obnoxious to the suspicions and resentments of the governing powers; every innovation will be represented as in a peculiar degree dangerous, and is likely to be suppressed, if possible, by all imaginary methods of craft and violence: not to mention that the communication between countries of opposite pretensions and interests being shut up, the propagation of true religion would be exceedingly obstructed.

Now, all these inconveniences which attend a state of war in general, formed the real situation and state of things for a long time before our Blessed Saviour's appearance: But, after the most polite and flourishing parts of the world had, for several centuries, been disquieted and shaken by frequent revolutions of empire, and harrassed by almost perpetual wars—in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, these competitions and convulsions ceased;—and *THEN the Saviour of the World, the Prince of Peace, was born*; the substance of whose commission was, to assert the *glory* of the tri-une and eternal God, by his infinitely satisfactory atonement, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit;

whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For ^h we through the Spirit wait ⁱ for the hope of righteousness by faith.

^a Rom. 8. 13, 26. Gen. 49. 18.

¹ Col. 3. 5. Rom. 8. 24. Tit. 2. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Rom. 5. 1—5, 10, 21.

Spirit; and thereby also to establish in the hearts of men love to God and love to each other; and, of consequence, that peace among men, that amiable and generous spirit of unconfined benevolence, which, if it prevailed, would make cruelty relent, bend stubborn pride, and allay the raging heat of ambition.—And it is farther observable, that the external peace which now subsisted, was not only more universal, but continued longer than had been often known in the history of preceding times; by which means, among others, Christianity became more established, till at length, through divine grace, that Roman power, which had severely oppressed and persecuted the professors of it, submitted, and owned its authority. Thus then we see that our blessed Saviour appeared at that period of time best fitted for trying, examining, proving, enforcing, and conveying his doctrines to all parts of the world, and to all succeeding ages and generations.

Again, one reason why his coming was so long delayed, was probably in order to justify the conduct of God in his dispensations to mankind, and to enable us to answer the cavil so often urged against the Christian dispensation—“Where was the necessity of this extraordinary step?—“Could nothing less than the Son of God redeem mankind from their sins, and inform and instruct the world?”

To this the answer is now obvious:—“All other methods of effecting that purpose had been tried, or put in force, and all proved ineffectual.”—When the preaching of Noah for an hundred years together was found utterly fruitless for the regeneration and reformation of mankind, God destroyed the whole race, one family excepted, by a flood.—When longevity and the experience of ages were found only to inspire mankind with confidence and security in sinning, God contracted their lives from period to period, until he reduced them to the present pittance.—When the example and influence of Noah, and the recent judgments of God upon the earth, could not restrain his sons from the vanity and evil tendencies of building the city and tower of Babel, God at once, by a signal interposition, confounded their language and their devices. The terrors of this judgment could scarcely be abated, before the signal *plagues* of God upon Abraham, and his judgments upon *Edom*, became an open monition to mankind of divine favour and protection to piety, and vengeance upon wickedness. When the Egyptians began to grow eminent over the other empires of the world, God signally interposed for the manifestation of the true religion, by the ministry of *Jeseph*; from whom, there is good reason to believe, they were more or less taught the worship of the true God, and the duties which they owed him. And when this nation became perfectly corrupt, through length of time and the increase of power and wealth, God again interposed for the deliverance of his people from among them, with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, to the terror of the whole world, and the manifestation of his more immediate providence and dominion over the affairs of men.

From this time his peculiar people subsisted in the midst of their enemies by little less than a series of miracles, until they became, under David and Solomon, the greatest empire of the earth; and then the lustre and glory of the true religion was amply exhibited to the whole world around them.

As they became corrupt, the Egyptian monarchy prevailed, and principally upon their ruins;—as they repented, they were redeemed; and as they returned to their corruptions, they were gradually and proportionably oppressed by the succeeding monarchies: but still, in each of these,—in the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian, God signally interposed, by prophets, by miracles, by visions, and by signal judgments from heaven, for the manifestation of the true religion;—and, last of all,—when all these mercies, miracles, judgments, deliverances, monitions, visions, failed, and were found ineffectual; when the wisest and the divinest poets failed; when lawgivers, politicians, philosophers, and prophets proved insufficient for the instruction, regeneration, and amendment of the world!—the Divine Wisdom once more interposed, by sending down THE SON OF GOD from heaven, to atone, instruct, and, by his Holy Spirit, regenerate all that would believe. From all these reasons united, it is therefore clearly evident, that the period when Christ so came was the fittest season,—the *fulfulness of time* for sending a Saviour into the world.

And now, from what we have seen with respect to the *past*, we may extend our view to *future* times. For, as the Supreme Being must be at liberty to confer favours which could not be *claimed*, and as he has been pleased actually to communicate a *revelation* of these glorious truths,—we have sufficient ground to hope, yea, to be fully confident, not only from these arguments, but from the sure word of prophecy, that it certainly will be hereafter *universally* diffused. And if there will be *such a future period*, as we are fully assured there will, we may justly presume, from what we are convinced was the case at the *first promulgation* of the gospel, “that there will be sufficient evidence to convince thoughtful inquirers, that *this also* is the *fittest season*—which could be fixed upon to answer the gracious design of Providence.”

There are several circumstances already opened to our view, which demonstrate, that even *now* Christianity might be spread vastly farther than it could ever be during the continuance of the Roman empire.—A great part of the globe is planted by colonies of nominal *Christians*, which, but a few ages ago, was utterly unknown; and, besides the late discoveries and settlements in America, the commerce and trade of *Christendom* has extended itself to very remote *Eastern* nations, where the Roman arms never penetrated; nay, and where it is probable that the very *name* of heathen Rome, even in the height of its power and splendor, was never heard of. Add to this,—the considerable modern improvements in *navigation*, which procure us so

6 ^k For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

7 ^l Ye did run well; * who did hinder you

^k 1 Cor. 7. 19. & 8. 8. Ch. 6. 15. Rom. 2. 25—29. & 3. 28—31. Ch. 3. 26—8. Col. 3. 1. Jam. 2. 22. 1 The. 1. 3. ^l Matt. 13. 21.
1 Cor. 9. 24. Ch. 3. 1. Heb. 12. 1. * Or who did drive you back?

easy an access to these newly-discovered countries;—the *intercourse* which we are capable of maintaining with the inhabitants, by the help of persons skilled in their several languages; together with the invention of *printing*,—that important method of *improving*, and easy way of *dispersing* knowledge: and all these concur, with the most important method of all, the establishment of missions, to facilitate the propagation of the gospel, beyond what could reasonably be expected in preceding ancient times.

But, notwithstanding all these, the critical period for making Christianity the universal religion does not seem to be yet come. Many obstacles remain, and several necessary preparations for this great event are still wanting. However, we ourselves can easily imagine that this *certain conjuncture* is not at a vast distance from us, considering the frequent and *surprising* vicissitudes and revolutions, in the course of human affairs, which have lately happened in a very short period of time.

For, (to conclude these remarks,) if the use of *printing* became established, and, of consequence, ingenuity and freedom of inquiry gained ground, in the vast Turkish empire,—and both were thence transferred to other Mahometan states;—and if those *Christians* who are conversant with infidel nations would behave towards them with justice and generosity, and treat them like *men*, and not, as if they were of an inferior species, like *brutes*, or *slaves*; if they would cease from corrupting the morals of the Mahometan or of the Pagan idolater, while they were persuading him to turn to *their holy religion*; if they would give substantial and shining proofs that they were not *wholly* intent on worldly gain,—not influenced by a rapacious *ambition*, nor fond of *luxury*, nor devoted to *intemperance*: if, on the contrary, they *honoured* their profession, through the grace of God, by the practice of those engaging graces and virtues which the gospel inculcates; and, above all, if God were pleased (as I doubt not but he soon will be) to open the way in those countries for ministers of the gospel after his own heart, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost—*then* we might justly apprehend that the time was drawing very nigh when, *over ALL the earth*, as the prophet had foretold, there shall be *ONE Lord*, and *his NAME one*; (Zech. xiv. 9.) or, in the language of St. Paul, *when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and ALL Israel shall be saved*. Rom. xi. 25, 26.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle had hinted before that the state of those who were under the law was a kind of minority. He here enlarges on that subject, shewing the vast superiority of the gospel above the legal dispensation.

1. Before Christ came, they were in a state of nonage. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, entitled to the inheritance; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father, when he should be declared of age, and enter upon the management of his own affairs. Even

so we, and all the people of God under the old Testament, when we were children, in the infantile state of the church, were in bondage under the elements of the world, subject to the law, with all the carnal ordinances, which were, as the first letters of the alphabet, designed to lead us on to higher attainments, and kept us, during this time of nonage, in a state of bondage. But,

2. Under the gospel dispensation our condition is much happier. When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, his only begotten, one in the same divine nature and essence, born of a woman, that he might be manifested in the flesh, made under the law, appointed both to endure the penalty due to our transgressions, and to fulfil the broken Adamic covenant of immaculate obedience; that he might thereby *redeem them that were under the law*, under its bondage and curse, that we, who believe in him, might receive the adoption of sons, admitted to that high privilege, and, if faithful unto death, blessed with all its happy consequences. And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, through the glorified Redeemer, who hath all fulness of the Spirit to bestow on his believing people, and forms their hearts, by his divine operations, to the temper becoming the high dignity and relation with which they are honoured; so that, through the effectual working of the Holy Ghost, we are enabled, with fiducial dependance, filial love, and sacred joy, to approach a throne of grace, crying, *Abba, Father*. Wherefore, wherever this Spirit is given, *thou art no more a servant, but a son*, admitted to that honourable place in God's family; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ, and entitled, if perseveringly faithful, to everlasting blessedness: so that, to return to the law for acceptance with God, is absurd and needless. Note, (1.) God manifest in the flesh is the foundation of every hope to the sinner. (2.) If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; the grace of adoption always accompanies the privilege of adoption. (3.) That soul is happy, which is enabled, with humble and holy boldness, to approach our gracious God, crying, *Abba, Father*; and claiming this kindred with him, which he will not disown.

2dly, To shew them the glaring folly of their having recourse to the law for justification, he reminds them,

1. Of their former state of Gentilism. Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, grossly ignorant of his Being, perfections, and attributes, and, in fact, without God in the world, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods, worshipping senseless idols, and ascribing divinity to stocks and stones. In this state of horrid ignorance and guilt did the Apostle find them, and called them out of darkness into marvellous light.

2. How absurd then was their defection from the truth which they had received! But now after that ye have known God, through the gospel of his dear Son, or rather are known of God, approved and accepted of him in the Redeemer, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto

ye

that ye should not obey the truth ?

8 ^a This persuasion cometh not of him that

calleth you.

9 ^b A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

^a Ch. 1. 6. & 3. 1. & 4. 17.

^b 1 Cor. 5. 6. & 15. 33. 1 Tim. 2. 17. with Mat. 13. 33.

ye desire again to be in bondage ? What infatuation has seized you, to leave the gospel dispensation of light, love, and liberty, for the bondage, darkness, and fear of the Mosaic institutions, weak, and insufficient to cleanse the soul from guilt, or to obtain acceptance with God ; and beggarly, when compared with the superior riches of gospel grace. *Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years, placing dependance on the ceremonial ordinances of the Jewish ritual, as essential to your justification before God.* And where this is the case, *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain,* and that, departing thus from the fundamentals of the gospel, notwithstanding all our preaching, you should finally perish. *Note,* (1.) Many who make, for a while, fair professions, prove, in the end, soul apostates. (2.) Nothing more effectually destroys the soul, than a departure from that fundamental point of the gospel, *justification by faith alone.* (3.) It is a deep concern to the true ministers of Christ, when they, in whom they had hoped to see the fruit of their labours, disappoint their expectations.

3dly, The Apostle,

1. With affectionate address, desires to win upon them. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am,* united with me in affection as I am to you, and imitate my example, leaving these Jewish rites, and cleaving to Christ alone for justification before God ; *for I am as ye are,* one with you in fervent charity, and we are equally entitled to the privileges of the gospel : *ye have not injured me at all ;* the injury you do is to Christ, and your own souls ; and what I say proceeds not from any private resentment, but purely from a zeal for his glory, and your good ; and if any disrespect may have been cast on me, I entirely overlook it. *Note,* The rebuke, which is tempered with love, will always be most effectual.

2. He reminds them of the former affection and esteem which they had shewn him. *Ye know, how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.* And my temptation in the flesh, (whether his sufferings, weakness of body, or ungraceful appearance, they knew what he meant, though we do not, for certain ; but whatever it was, he could say) *ye despised not, nor rejected ;* did not therefore slight my ministry, nor treat my person with contempt, but received me as an angel of God, with all veneration and regard, as a messenger sent from heaven, yea, even as Christ Jesus : had he himself appeared in the flesh among you, religious adoration excepted, ye could hardly have paid him greater respect. *Where is then the blessedness you spake of ?* those ardent wishes for my happiness, and the delight you expressed in the gospel which I preached unto you ? *for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me,* counting nothing too great to testify the sense of your gratitude towards me. *Note,* many, in their first love, are all on fire for Christ, and never think they can enough testify their regard to the ministers of their conversion, who by and by grow cold or perverted from the truth, and treat

with contempt those whom they once respected as almost angelical.

3. He expostulates with them on the strange alteration which now appeared. *Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth,* and kindly warn you of the deadly consequences of your defection from the purity of the gospel ? *Note,* (1.) Truth, honestly spoken, often creates us enemies. (2.) Ministers may expect that their fidelity will offend. (3.) Whether men will hear or forbear, we must speak, nor fear any consequences.

4thly, St. Paul knew the spirit and temper with which the Judaizing teachers acted ; and he,

1. Warns the Galatians of it. *They zealously affect you,* and pretend great zeal for you, but not well ; their professions are dissembled, and their designs crafty ; yea, they would exclude you from me and your true friends, who preach the pure gospel to you, that you might affect them, and yield your consciences up to their direction. *Note,* All is not gold which glitters ; we should try before we trust : hypocrisy, for selfish ends, can put on the fairest guise of truth.

2. He points out to them the rule which they should follow. *But it is good,* and the proof of an excellent spirit, to be zealously affected always in a good thing, or to a good man, and not only when I am present with you ; whilst, on the contrary, an unsteady, wavering conduct shews that the heart is not well grounded in the truth, and discovers a dishonourable levity and inconstancy.

5thly, To engage their hearts, and prevail on them to return from their sad defection from the truth,

1. He expresses his tender affection towards them. *My little children,* dear to me as such, amidst all the weakness you discover ; *of whom I travail in birth again,* with such agonies of spirit, longing for your present recovery, as when I first desired to turn you from your foul idolatry ; until Christ be formed in you, your souls effectually brought under the influence of his gospel, and his image stamped upon your hearts, *I desire to be present with you,* that I may more fully enter upon the subject, confound the gainsayers, and defend the fundamental articles of Christianity, from which you have swerved ; and, if it so pleased the Lord to make my preaching effectual to your conversion, to change my voice from rebuke to consolation ; for I own, at present *I stand in doubt of you,* whether you may not yet be cast away. *Note,* (1.) Ministers travail in birth for immortal souls ; and feel an affection for those whom they have begotten in the gospel, like the tender mother's sensibility towards her infant offspring. (2.) Christ is not formed in that heart where self-righteousness and self-dependance still prevail. (3.) 'Tis no charity to think well, when we see evidently what is evil ; though we wish to change our voice, and to behold a happy reformation.

2. He expostulates with the Judaizers, who sought justification by the deeds of the law. *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not bear the law ?* If you attentively considered the history of Abraham, you would see the

10 ° I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded : but ^p he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

° 2 Cor. 2. 3. & 8. 22. with Ch. 1. 6. & 4. 11. 10. 6.

^p Ch. 1. 7. & 3. 1. & 4. 17. & 6. 12, 13. Acts, 15. 1, 10, 24. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 13. 2 Cor.

the folly of your attempt. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, Agar, an Egyptian, the other by a free-woman, Sarah : and he who was of the bond-maid, Ishmael, was born after the flesh, in the ordinary course of nature : but he of the free-woman, Isaac, was by promise, given of God, when both his parents were naturally incapable of issue. Which things are an allegory, or allegorized, and have a spiritual meaning beyond the mere letter of the words ; for these, Hagar and Sarah, are the figures of the two covenants ; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, begetting a slavish spirit, and leaving the soul under condemnation, which is Agar, and represented by her. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia ; and her being cast out with her son, is a lively figure of the rejection of those, who, to the neglect of the Saviour, will live in bondage under the law, which was delivered on that mountain ; and this bond-woman answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children, abandoned for their infidelity, and excluded from all the blessings of the covenant. But Jerusalem which is above, the church of genuine believers, who, by faith in Christ, look for glory and immortality, is free from all the condemnation of sin in the law ; of which Sarah is the type, and may be considered as the mother of us all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, like her son Isaac, are entitled, through persevering faith in the Redeemer, to all the promised blessings. For it is written, with particular reference to Sarah, Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not ; break forth and cry thou that travailest not ; thou Gentile land, which, like Sarah, hast long been spiritually barren, now exult in this vast progeny ; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband, more converts springing from among the heathen, where all hope of such a seed was despaired of, than are to be found among those, who, under the Sinai covenant, were, during so many hundreds of years, espoused to the Lord as their husband. Now we, brethren, who through grace are joined to Christ by faith, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise, born of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. But as then he that was born after the flesh (Ishmael) persecuted, with mockery and reproaches, him that was born after the Spirit ; namely, Isaac, the child of the promise ; even so it is now, the carnal Jews, who contend for justification by the works of the law, deride and persecute us, who maintain that justification is by faith alone. Nevertheless, what saith the scripture ? Cast out the bond-woman and her son : for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman ; and so surely will they be excluded from the heavenly inheritance, who seek it by the deeds of the law. So then we, brethren, who expect justification by faith only, are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free, and shall, if we continue to cleave to Christ in the liberty of the gospel, inherit that eternal life, from which they who are of the law, and depend upon their own doings for their acceptance with God, must be for ever excluded. Note, (1.) To

understand the scriptures, we must look further than the letter. (2.) Reproach and ridicule are, in God's account, persecution ; and this, at least, all who live godly in Christ Jesus must endure, till the great Millennium rushes in upon the world.

CHAP. V.

THE Apostle, in the third chapter, having, from Abraham's justification by faith, proved, 1. That all who believe are the seed of Abraham, whom God in the covenant promised to justify by faith :—2. That the law of Moses, which was given long after the covenant was ratified by the oath of God, could neither annul nor alter the covenant, by introducing a method of justification different from that which was so solemnly established in the covenant :—3. That men are heirs of the heavenly country, of which Canaan was the type, not meritoriously by obedience to the law, but by the free gift of God.—4. That the law was given to the Israelites, not to justify them, but to restrain them from transgressions ; and, by making them sensible of their sins, and of the demerit of their sins, to lead them to Christ for justification.—Farther, having, in the fourth chapter, observed, that the method of justification by faith, established at the fall, was not universally published, in the first ages, by immediately introducing the gospel dispensation ; because the state of the world, in the first ages, did not admit thereof, and because it was proper that mankind should remain a while under the tuition of the Adamic law, and of the law of Moses, accompanied, indeed, by such measures of divine grace as would be sufficient, through the merits of the Redeemer, for the salvation of every faithful soul :—also, having declared, that the supernatural generation of Isaac, and his birth in a state of freedom, were intended to typify the supernatural generation of Abraham's seed by faith, and their freedom from the bondage of the law of Moses, as a term of salvation, the Apostle, in this fifth chapter, as the application of the whole of his doctrine, exhorted the Galatians to stand firm in that freedom from the law of Moses, as a term of salvation, wherewith Christ had freed them in the gospel dispensation ; and by no means to be again held fast in bondage to any ritual form of worship, ver. 1.—Then, with the authority of an inspired Apostle, he solemnly declared, that, if they sought salvation by receiving circumcision, Christ would be of no manner of use to them as a Saviour, ver. 2.

The Judaizing teachers, who enjoined obedience to the law of Moses as necessary to salvation, being sensible that the burdensomeness of the services required by Moses might deter the Gentiles from receiving circumcision, had, it seems, made the Galatians believe that circumcision did not bind those, who lived out of Judea, to obey the more troublesome and expensive services of the law ; such as the offering of sacrifices, the paying of tythes, the going up

11 And I, brethren, ^a if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution ?

then is the offence of the cross ceased.

12 ^b I would they were even cut off which

^a Ch. 6. 12, 17. & 4. 29. 1 Cor. 1. 23. Acts, 16. 3. Ch. 2. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 20.

^b Joh. 7. 25. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 13. 2 Cor. 10. 6. Ch. 1. 8, 9. Tit. 3. 10.

up to Jerusalem three times in the year, &c. but to obey those precepts only which were of easy performance, namely, the keeping of the sabbaths, the new moons, and the other holy days enjoined in the law: the abstaining from unclean meats, the avoiding of the company of the uncircumcised, &c. Wherefore, to undeceive the Galatians, the Apostle solemnly testified to them, that every circumcised person, who sought to be justified by the law of Moses, bound himself to obey all its precepts, without exception, and subjected himself to its curse, if he failed in the least particular, ver. 3.—In short, they separated themselves from Christ, who sought to be meritoriously justified by the law of Moses; and, to their unspeakable loss, excluded themselves from the grace offered in the gospel, ver. 4.—as they might know from this, that all who were to Christ are warranted, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, to consider themselves as justified through faith, without the works of the law of Moses, ver. 5.—Besides, in the gospel dispensation, neither circumcision, nor the want of it, availeth any thing to men's acceptance with God, but the faith which strongly works by love to God and to man, ver. 6.—Next, the Apostle having observed that, at the first, the Galatians made good proficiency in the doctrines of the gospel, he asked, who it was that now interrupted their progress, so as to make them forsake the truth, ver. 7—9. and hoped, that when they considered what he had written, they would not think differently from him, concerning the method of justification, ver. 10.—And because his enemies had said, that, since he conversed with the apostles at Jerusalem, he had altered his doctrine, and now taught the necessity of circumcision, he desired to know how it came to pass that the Jews still persecuted him? For, if he preached circumcision, the stumbling-block of the cross of Christ was certainly removed out of their way, ver. 11.—Then concluded, with wishing them to cut off by excommunication the person who had subverted them, ver. 12.

The doctrinal part of the Epistle being finished, the Apostle, in what remains, advised the Galatians not to use their freedom from the law of Moses, with respect to meats, as a pretence for gratifying their sensual appetites, to the offence of their weaker Jewish brethren, who still thought the meats forbidden by Moses unclean, ver. 13.—Because, in so doing, they would break the great Christian law of love, ver. 14.—the Jews, by speaking of the Gentiles as profane persons; and the Gentiles, by representing the Jews as ignorant bigots. For, said the Apostle, by thus giving occasion to the flesh to exercise its lusts in biting and devouring one another, ye will bring destruction on one another, ver. 15.—He therefore commanded them to obey the dictates of the Spirit of God, and not to fulfil the lusts of their flesh. Withal, to make them the more watchful in that respect, he told them, that the inclinations of the Spirit and of the flesh are oftentimes contrary the one to

the other: and that, through the prevalence of the inclinations of the flesh, men are frequently hindered from doing what the Spirit inclines them to do. At the same time, to encourage them, he assured them, that if they followed the dictates of the Spirit of God, they would not fall under the curse of any law whatever, ver. 18.—Then, to shew what sort of actions the lust of the flesh would lead them to perform, he enumerated the works of the flesh: and, to make them sensible of the dangerous nature of these works, he foretold now, as he had done before, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, ver. 19—21.—Also he enumerated the fruits of the Spirit; and, in their commendation, took notice, that their excellency is so evident, that in no nation was there ever any law made against them, ver. 22, 23.—Farther, as a powerful motive to renounce the works of the flesh, he assured them that all Christ's faithful disciples have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts, ver. 24.—In short, since the Galatians lived under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, he commanded them to walk according to its rules, ver. 25.—And cautioned such as possessed the spiritual gifts to avoid vain-glory in the exercise of them, that they might not provoke their brethren to anger and strife. And those who were destitute of the spiritual gifts, he exhorted them not to envy those who were endowed with them, ver. 26.

Ver. 2. Behold,] This word is used to fix their attention. *I, Paul;*—“I, the same Paul, who am reported to preach “circumcision,—testify again, (ver. 3.)—continue my testimony, to every man; to you, and all men.” This very emphatical way of speaking may well be understood to have regard to what he takes notice of ver. 11. namely, his preaching circumcision; and is a very significant vindication of himself. *If ye be circumcised,* means, “If ye submit to circumcision, and depend on that, and the observance of the rest of the Jewish rites, for justification “and salvation.” It must have been allowed that either Judaism or Christianity was necessary to salvation. If Judaism had been necessary, Christianity could not be so; and (*vice versa*), it is the same, if the argument be reversed. It was plain, therefore, that if the observance of circumcision, and other Jewish rites, was obligatory, all that Christ had done and suffered would have been of no advantage to them; for if the soul could not repose its confidence in him for salvation, its divided regards would be rather an affront than an act of homage.

Ver. 5. For we] It is evident, from the context, that St. Paul here means himself; but *we*, is a more graceful way of speaking than *I*, though he be vindicating himself alone from the imputation of setting up circumcision.

Ver. 6. Faith which worketh by love.] There is some degree of ambiguity in the original:—*Δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.* It may be rendered either *which operates, and works by love;* or, *which is wrought, inspired and perfected by love.* Some have preferred the latter sense; and have taken occasion

trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour

as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

* Ver. 1. Ch. 4, 5—7, 16, 28, 31. 1 Cor. 8, 9. & 9, 19. 1 Pet. 2, 16. Rom. 14, 17, 14. Ch. 6, 1, 2. with 2 Pet. 2, 19, 20. Jude 3, 4. Lev. 19, 18. Mat. 7, 12. & 22, 38, 39. Rom. 13, 8—10. Jam. 2, 8. 1 Tim. 1, 5. 1 Cor. 13, 4—7. 2 Pet. 1, 5—8. Heb. 13, 1. * 2 Cor. 12, 20. Jam. 3, 14—16. & 4, 1. If. 9, 20, 21. Ver. 26. * Rom. 6, 12. & 8, 1, 4, 13. 1 Pet. 2, 11. 2 Cor. 7, 1. Ver. 21—25. * Or fulfil not.

hence to shew, how much love tends to establish and perfect faith: but the former, which is the more usual sense, appears to be authorized by the use of the same word, Eph. iii. 20. and Col. i. 29.

Ver. 7. *Who did hinder you, &c.*] The word Ἀνεκοίη, rendered *hinder*, is an olympic expression, answerable to the word rendered *ye did run*: and it properly signifies, “Coming across the course, while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to juggle, and throw him out of the way.”

Ver. 8. *Of him that calleth you.*] He used this expression before, ch. i. 6. and in both places means himself; and here declares that this πεισμονή, whether taken for *persuasion*, or for *subjection* (as it may well be in St. Paul’s style, considering the word πειθεσθαι, at the end of the foregoing verse) came not from him; for he called them to liberty from the law, and not *subjection* to it. See ver. 13. His argument runs thus: “You were going on well in the liberty of the gospel; who stopped you?—I, you may be sure, had no concern in it; for you know that I called you to liberty, and not to subjection to the law; and therefore you can, by no means, suppose that I should preach up circumcision.” From the two following verses, it looks as if all the disorders here complained of arose from one man.

Ver. 10. *Will be none otherwise minded.*] “Will beware of this leaven, so as not to be put into a ferment, nor shaken in your liberty, in which you ought to stand fast: and, to secure it, I doubt not, (such confidence I have in you) you will, with one accord, cast out him that troubleth you. For, as for me, you may be sure I am not for circumcision, in that the Jews continue to persecute me.” This is evidently the Apostle’s meaning, though not spoken out, but managed warily, with a very skilful and moving insinuation. Κεῖμα, *judgment*, here seems to mean expulsion by a church censure, *cutting off* from church communion. See ver. 12. We shall be more inclined to this opinion, if we consider that the Apostle uses the same argument of a little leaven leavening the whole lump, 1 Cor. v. 6. where he would persuade the Corinthians to purge out the fornicator. Some, however, would extend the meaning to the solemn account which this troubler of the church’s peace should give to God, and to the condemnation he should certainly receive, if he persisted in the endeavours he was using to subvert the truth. See on 1 Cor. iv. 21.

Ver. 11. *Persecution?*] The *persecution* which St. Paul was still under, was a convincing argument that he was not for circumcision and subjection to the law; for it was from the Jews, upon that account, that at this time arose almost all

the persecutions which the Christians suffered;—as may be seen throughout the history of the Acts: nor are there wanting clear footsteps of it in several other places of this Epistle, as ch. iii. 4. vi. 12—14.

Ver. 12. *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*] *Who subvert or unsettle you.* It by no means agrees with the gentle genius of Christianity to suppose that this Apostle, who understood it so well, and cultivated it so much, should mean by this to intimate that he wished these troublers *dead*, or that any *bodily evil* were inflicted upon them by human violence. All arguments, therefore, which are drawn from this text in favour of persecuting principles, must be very inconclusive: but when we consider the particular circumstances in which these seducing teachers opposed the Apostle, it will appear that they very well deserved that *ecclesiastical censure* which he here wishes to be pronounced against them. Some, following a different reading, render this verse, *They ought to be cut off, and shall in reality be cut off, who trouble you.*

Ver. 13. *Only use not liberty.*] From the mention of *liberty*, to which St. Paul tells them they are called under the gospel, he takes occasion to caution them respecting the use of it, and so exhorts them to a spiritual or true Christian life; shewing the difference and contrariety between that and a carnal life, or a life after the flesh, ver. 13—26. The word δουλεύε, rendered *serve*, has a greater force in the Greek than our English word *serve* expresses, in the common acceptation; for it signifies the opposite to ἐλευθερίαν, *liberty*; and so the Apostle elegantly informs them, that, though by the gospel they are called to a state of liberty from the law, yet they were still as much bound and subjected to their brethren, in all the offices and duties of love and good-will, as if in that respect they were their vassals and bondmen.

Ver. 16. *This I say then, walk in the Spirit, &c.*] That is, “I have been cautioning you against that contentious temper which is so great a reproach to the professors of Christianity, and tends so much to the detriment of our common faith. But, that I may effectually guard you against this and every other evil, I have a charge to give you, and, in a word, I say, *Walk in the Spirit*, and at all times endeavour to conduct yourselves as under the influences of that blessed Agent, and in a way agreeable to the new nature that he has given you, and then ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh; so that, if you be not yet delivered from the remainders of corruption, yet by his powerful suggestions, and by the gracious aids which you receive from him, you will be happily preserved from the predominancy of carnal and irregular appetites,

17 ^r 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.

18 ^z But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 ^a Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these* ; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But ^b the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

^r Rom. 7. 14—24. & 8. c—8, 13. Eph. 6. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 11. Col. 3. 5. Eph. 5. 3, 4, 7, 11. ^a Ezek. 36. 27. Pf. 143. 10. John, 16. 18. 1 John, 8. 20, 27. Rom. 6. 14. & 8. 1, 2, 4, 13—15. 2 Cor. 3. 17. 2 Tim. 1. 7. Ch. 4. 5, 6. ^b Job, 14. 4. & 15. 16. Lev. xviii. xx. Mat. 15. 19. Mark, 7. 20—23. Rom. 1. 28—31. & 3, 10—18. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Eph. 5. 3—6. Col. 3. 5—9. Jam. 3. 14—16. Rev. 21. 8. & 22. 15. If. 5. 8—14. & 3. 11. Rom. 3. 1, 20. & 2. 8, 9. & 3. 13. Ezek. 18. 4. ^c John, 15. 2. Eph. 5. 9. Ezek. 26. 26, 27. 2 Pet. 1. 5—8. Col. 3. 10—16. Rom. xii—xiv. & 15. 14. 1 Thes. v.

“tites, so that the work of mortification and all the exercises of true godliness, will daily become more and more “easy and familiar to you.” Instead of, *ye shall not fulfil, some read, ye shall in nowise fulfil.*

Ver. 17. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, &c.*] As it is plain that by the *flesh*, which is the same with what the Apostle calls *the body of sin* and *the old man* (Rom. vi. 6.), we are to understand that *natural corruption* and depravity which is the ruling principle in a state of nature : so by *the Spirit*, which is here set in opposition to it, and is elsewhere expressed by the *new man* that is put on by such as are renewed in the Spirit of their mind (Eph. iv. 23, 24.), we are to understand that *supernatural principle of grace* which is imparted from above to the renewed soul, to overcome the passions of the carnal mind, to set us free from the dominion of our lusts, and to inspire us with a love to holiness; which divine and heavenly principle being communicated to us by *the Holy Spirit*, has frequently the title of *the Spirit* given to it, as it is plainly the effect and fruit of it; for *that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit* (John iii. 6).—And there is such a *contrariety* in these *two principles*, that, where they exist together, they are continually opposing one another in their desires and tendency; so that (as the Apostle adds) *ye do not the things that ye would*, (for so it is expressed in the original, and not, *ye cannot do*, &c.) ye do them not without doing violence to the opposite principle which would be drawing you another way.

Ver. 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit,*) “But if ye give yourselves up to the conduct of the Spirit of God, by “faith in Christ, ye are not under the law.” For *they who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God*; and to heirs, and free. This is plainly the sense of the Apostle, who teaches all along, in the former part of this Epistle, as well as of that to the Romans, that those who put themselves under the gospel, are not under the law of Moses, or under the Adamic law. The reason of the Apostle’s thus using the word *Spirit*, is, indeed, very apparent in the doctrine of the New Testament; which teaches that those who receive Christ, by faith, with *him* receive his Spirit, and its sacred and powerful influences against the flesh. See Rom. viii. 9—11. Accordingly, for the obtaining of salvation, St. Paul joins together *belief of the truth*, and *sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thes. ii. 13. See also Ephes. iii. 16.

VOL. II.

Ver. 19. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest* ;] If *flesh* be taken for the irregularities of the appetite,—for that natural corruption which infects the faculties of every man by nature; it extends to the mind, as well as to the appetites of the body; and there will be no difficulty in ascribing each of the particular crimes here enumerated to the *flesh*, as they all proceed from that corruption, by means of which *even the mind and conscience is defiled*. Titus i. 15.

Ver. 20. *Witchcraft,*] Some would render the word *Φαρμακεία* by *poisoning*; but surely this is comprehended under the word *murders*; nor is there any reason to believe the flesh so particularly inclined to this one kind of murder, as that it should be specified rather than any other. It is certain that, on account of the *drugs* made use of in some supposed *magical compositions*, this word is often used to express practices of that kind; to which the Gentiles, even in the most learned nations, were very much addicted. We render the word *διζοροδοσία*, *seditions*; but as the original word seems more general, some would express it more largely by *divisions of a party-spirit*, among those who ought to be united in one interest and affection. Perhaps, however, by this word the Apostle means to point out *divisions in the state*, as by the next he refers to *divisions in religion*—*heresies* in religious communities, by which professing Christians are induced to separate from each other, and to form parties, which, instead of maintaining true candour, benevolence, and love, renounce and condemn each other.

Ver. 21. *Revellings,*] *Κῆδοι*, or *revellings*, among the Greeks, were a disorderly spending of the night in feasting, with a licentious indulging in wine, good cheer, music, dancing, &c. See Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

Ver. 22. *Faith,*] *Fidelity*; which the word *πίστις* undoubtedly signifies in many places. See on Matth. xxiii. 23. So that in one place we may understand it of the *faithfulness of God*, or his *fidelity* to his promises, Rom. iii. 3. and where it is applied to *servants*, we expressly render it *fidelity*: Titus ii. 10. And though it generally signifies the grace of *faith*, or the *confidence* reposed in another; yet, where we find it joined, as in the place before us, with other graces, or moral virtues, it may be rather taken to denote fidelity. See 1 Tim. iv. 12. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22. iii. 10. and Rev. ii. 19.

3 F

Ver.

23 Meekness, temperance : ' against such there is no law.

24 ' And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the * affections and lusts.

25 ' If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 ' Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

* 1 Tim. 1. 9. Rom. 13. 3. Ch. 3. 9. ^d Ver. 16, 18. Rom. 6. 6. & 8. 17. Ch. 2. 20. Eph. 4. 22. Col. 3. 5, 9. Rom. 13. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 11. Ch. 6. 14. * *Of passions.* ^e Rom. 8. 5, 6, 1, 4. Ver. 16, 18, 22, 23. Eph. 5. 9. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Tit. 2. 11—14. Phil. 3. 3. ^f Psal. 2. 3. Luke, 14. 10. Rom. 12. 10. 2 Cor. 12. 20. Eph. 5. 21. Jam. 3. 14—16. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Ver. 15.

Ver. 23. Against such there is no law.] They have so manifest and evident a goodness in them, that they never were forbidden by any human institution.

Ver. 24. They that are Christ's.] These are the same with those who are led by the Spirit, ver. 18. and are opposed to those who live after the flesh; Rom. viii. 13. where it is said, conformably to what we find here, they through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body. That principle in us, whence spring vicious inclinations and actions, is sometimes called the flesh, sometimes the old man: the subduing and mortifying of this evil principle, so that the force and power wherewith it used to rule in us is extinguished, the Apostle, by a very engaging accommodation to the death of our Saviour, calls crucifying the flesh; and, in Rom. vi. 6. crucifying the old man. It is likewise called mortifying the members which are on the earth, Col. iii. 5. See also Col. ii. 11.

Ver. 25. If we live in the Spirit, &c.] Living in the Spirit expresses, in terms nearly resembling those in Acts, xvii. 28. our continual dependance on its influences; and also illustrates the significance of the word *σοιζώμεν*, in the latter part of the verse. Let us walk in the Spirit,—“in a regular and orderly manner, viewing God with the eye of faith; taking every step according to rule, and under the holy influence of the Spirit of God; regulating our whole life and actions by his light and dictates.”

Ver. 26. Envying one another.] Whether the vain-glory and envying here were about their spiritual gifts, (a fault whereof the Corinthians were guilty, as we may see at large 1 Cor. xii, xiii, xiv.) or upon any other occasion, or on any other account, and so contained in ver. 15. of this chapter, is not very important to inquire; either way the sense of the words will be much the same.

Inferences, drawn from verse 13.—*There is not a more valuable blessing in human life than liberty, whether civil liberty, as it respects social happiness, or liberty of conscience, as it respects religion. When this latter is restrained, we are treated rather like brutes than men; that is, creatures endued with moral powers, and accountable for their actions:—and therefore it is one of the chief excellencies of the Christian religion, and very far from the air and spirit of an *impfure*, that it preserves the rights of conscience sacred and inviolable.

But, because the world is apt to run into extremes, the

* The following thoughts are intended only for the Deists, who are too often to be found even in families which are in the general pious: but the Reflections will, I trust, make ample compensation to the sincere Christian.

7

writers of the New Testament, like persons who had a thorough knowledge of human nature, as well as being infallibly inspired by the Spirit of God, have taken care in this respect, as well as in all others, to guard against excess and irregularity. Thus St. Paul advises these Galatians not to mistake licentiousness for Christian liberty; or, in other words, not to imagine that, because they were freed from the expensive and burdensome observances of the Mosaic institution, (which is elegantly described as a state of *servitude*;) they were discharged likewise from moral obligations, which are an eternal and immutable law to all rational beings.

It may not be unseasonable to consider the subject in a light suited to the complexion and genius of the present age; and to inquire into some of the chief abuses of free-thinking; by which it happens that what is really the peculiar honour and greatest advantage of our intelligent nature, becomes a reproach to it, and is attended with the most injurious consequences.

1. And, first, embracing the principle of liberty, has ended, with many, through the abuse of that excellent principle, in infidelity, or a disbelief of all religion. It is most evident, that infidelity never more abounded than in this age of free inquiry; and that those who are most loose in their sentiments with respect to the obligations of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular, are, in profession at least, enemies to bigotry and implicit faith. Nay, it may be allowed further, that it is likely they would never have gone such a length as to throw off all religion, if they had continued in a blind attachment to the principles of their education, and to established and popular opinions.

Whence now can this arise?—We, who believe that religion, in all the parts of it, is strictly rational, can never allow that infidelity is the natural consequence of a free and impartial examination of it; but must suppose, on the contrary, that the more thoroughly it is considered, and the more nicely weighed in the balance of true and unbiassed reason, it will be the more heartily believed and submitted to, through the grace of God. Indeed, this melancholy event may be sufficiently accounted for from other causes, and shewn, not to proceed from a superior understanding, or more adequate and enlarged views of things, but from ignorance, superficial inquiry, and even from that prejudice and implicit faith which the monopolizers of reason and free-thinking so loudly disclaim.

It is by no means intended, by any thing here advanced, to discourage the most rational and free examination of all religious principles, be they ever so sacred and venerable, and

CHAP. VI.

He moveth them to deal mildly with a brother that hath slipped, and to bear one another's burden; to be liberal to their teachers, and not weary of well-doing: he sheweth what they intend that preach circumcision: he glorieth in nothing, save in the cross of Christ.

[Anno Domini 49]

BRETHREN, * if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore

such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2^b Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3^d For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work,

* Or although. ^a Sam. 11. 2—15. Rom. 14. 1. & 10. 1. & 12. 10. & 15. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 2. 15. & 3. 1. & 4. 21. & 9. 22. & 10. 12. 2 Thes. 3. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 14. Heb. 12. 15. Jam. 5. 19. 1 John, 5. 16. 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. Mat. 7. 1—5. Jam. 3. 1, 2. ^b Exod. 23. 5. Rom. 15. 1. Ch. 5. 13, 14. 1 Thes. 5. 14. & 4. 9. ^c Mat. 11. 29. John, 13. 14, 31. & 15. 12. 1 John, 4. 21. 1 Cor. 9. 21. Jam. 2. 8. ^d Prov. 25. 14. & 26. 12, 16. Luke, 18. 11. 1 Cor. 8. 2. Ch. 2. 6. 1 Cor. 3. 18. ^e Lam. 3. 40. Zeph. 2. 1. 1 Cor. 11. 28. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

and transmitted down with ever so much awe and solemnity by our forefathers; neither is it designed to assert that any man is obliged to receive a revelation, so called, which, upon mature deliberation, appears to be unworthy of God, and repugnant to the reason and nature of things. The present purpose is only to point out briefly some false principles, which are all an abuse of the true principle of liberty; and by which, it is highly probable, many of its professed admirers and zealous espousers have been led to a disregard of all religion.

Some seem to mistake liberty for a right to dispute every thing; and cavil at all religious principles which are commonly received, merely to shew that they are free-thinkers. Now, it is certain, that every one has an undoubted right to debate in his mind upon all principles, before he receives them, whether they are true or false; and no wise man will take up any opinion implicitly, how powerfully soever it may be recommended by great names and worldly advantages: but it also is certain, that disputing only for the sake of cavilling, is not an honest and ingenuous frame of mind, but humour, pride, and singularity. Such men think, perhaps, by this means, to pass for persons whose understandings are delivered from vulgar prejudices, and who, in their pursuits after knowledge, are under no bias, nor influenced by any consideration but the abstract reason and truth of things. And thus, what was at first only vanity, may, by degrees, be confirmed and settled infidelity: for the opposition such persons frequently meet with will make them more eager in opposing, more tenacious of what they have advanced, and more inclined to maintain it; till, at length, what they asserted and urged only for cavilling's sake, or from the spirit of contradiction, too natural to eager disputants, they fancy themselves obliged in honour to stand by, as their own genuine sentiments.

2. Another abuse of the principle of liberty is this, that it has led many, who have not proceeded so far as a downright disbelief of all religion, to pay little or no regard to instrumental and positive duties. Impartial inquiries into things have discovered the folly and mischief of superstition; and that reading, hearing, praying, &c. answer no valuable purposes, unless they influence men to govern their passions, and to behave and shew forth justice and universal benevolence to their fellow-creatures: and they have perhaps met with many hypocrites, the worst of characters, who,

while they profess to experience the powers of religion, and the divine influences of the Spirit of God, can keep back their neighbour's property, or defraud in other respects, &c. And hence they have strangely and inconsistently inferred, that the instrumental duties of piety are not only unnecessary, but hurtful; and that an inward veneration and esteem for God, improved by frequent serious meditation, is sufficient, without any outward stated acts of worship, and is all that is fit for us to perform, or God to expect;—an inference for which there is not the least colour of reason; nor can there be any thing more forced.

And, indeed, the ill effects of this notion are but too visible. For, those who have thus neglected all external religion, have, in general, been so far from improving, that they have rather declined in their zeal for the practice even of moral virtue, in proportion as they have grown remiss with respect to the solemn worship of God, and the instrumental duties of piety.

3. Freedom of thought, and impartial inquiry into the principles of religion, have also been abused and perverted in the present age, by degenerating into a light, trifling frame of mind, and a humour of treating things sacred with ridicule. With people who affect this way, liberty is nothing else but a free, bold manner of treating all subjects ludicrously, and turning them into a jest. They have a great inclination to shew their wit, especially upon points which afford the least room for it; for this discovers an uncommon genius!—But these empty triflers ought to know, “that there can be no true wit which has not reason for its foundation;—that ridiculing what is in itself good, useful, and venerable, fixes a certain reproach upon him who attempts it, either as to his understanding, or his morals;—that jesting with things of the highest consequence, is folly and madness;—that it is an easy matter, by misrepresenting, to make any thing appear ridiculous; and, consequently, that this talent is as far from being a demonstration that the person who possesses it is a wit, as it is from being an evidence of his good breeding, that, in violation of all the rules of decency, he banters and treats with scurrility that religion, for which all the pious and virtuous around him have a high value and regard.”

From what has been said we learn, that there are no doctrines, or truths, in themselves so excellent, but what

and then shall he 'have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

¹ Acts, 23, 1. & 24. 16. ² Cor. 1. 12. Phil. 3. 3. ³ Cor. 4. 3, 4. ⁴ Ezek. 18. 4. PC 96. 13. If. 3. 10, 11. Jer. 17. 10. & 32. 19. Mat⁵ 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. & 14. 12. ¹ Cor. 3. 8. ² Cor. 5. 10. Rev. 2. 23. & 20. 12, 13. & 21. 12.

are capable of being abused; and be their natural consequences ever so friendly and beneficial to mankind, may be made to produce the most mischievous effects: and yet, as this great and melancholy abuse is no just objection to the wisdom and goodness of God, so neither is it any argument against the excellency and usefulness of the things themselves;—no more than it is an argument against the necessary supports of life, that they are frequently abused to excess and intemperance; or, against wisdom, or talent, that it is too often madly perverted to the purposes of vice and immorality.

Since then this principle of freedom of thought, and an honest and impartial examination into the nature and evidence of religious matters, is the undoubted privilege of an intelligent being, and, in a peculiar manner, honourable, and on the whole highly advantageous to Christianity; let us, notwithstanding accidental abuses to which the best things are liable, constantly assert and vindicate it; ever remembering, that, though we are called to liberty, both these rules have the same foundation, and are of equal authority in the Christian revelation:—Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free;—but use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. Having established the doctrine which he undertook to prove, of free justification by faith alone, without the works of the law, he passes on to exhort them steadily to hold fast the truth. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free from the curse of the law, and its obligation as a covenant of works; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage, and, by submitting to circumcision, return to the Mosaic law as obligatory, and necessary to salvation. Note, (1.) Every true believer is Christ's freed-man. (2.) The liberty of the gospel is not a liberty to sin, but to serve God with freedom of spirit and willing obedience. The Apostle reinforces his exhortation with several arguments:

1. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. If you depend on this as essential to your justification before God, all Christ has done and suffered will be of no avail to you; ye are fallen from grace, and excluded from all the blessings of that gospel, whose doctrines you once professed to hold.

2. Every one of them who was circumcised was obliged to immaculate obedience to the law, under the penalty of the curse which it denounces. For I testify again (so earnest am I that this important matter be clearly understood) to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law; and having laid himself under such an obligation, must perish under the least failure, while he expects eternal life on the footing of his immaculate obedience to the law.

3. For even we, who are Jews, whose consciences have

been enlightened to see the spiritual demands of the law, despairing of acceptance with God that way, do, through the Spirit, under his divine illumination and influence, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, expecting earnestly and patiently that eternal life which God has promised, not by the merit of works, but through that faith in our great Redeemer, which works by love, and produces holiness of heart and life. And if the Jews were thus necessitated to renounce all dependance on their circumcision, and the legal institutions under which they had been brought up, if they would be saved; what folly would it be for Gentiles, who had never been subject to the law, to have recourse thereto?

4. The gospel has cancelled all distinction of Jew and Gentile. For in Jesus Christ, and under that gracious dispensation which he has introduced, neither circumcision awaiteth any thing, nor uncircumcision, as a recommendation to God's favour; but it is faith which worketh by love; that alone is available to salvation—faith, which lays our whole dependance on Christ alone, and, from a confidence in his love, engages our souls in love to him, and in universal benevolence to mankind. Note, (1.) Christ is to the believer all and in all. (2.) Faith justifies, not as a grace in us, but as it receives and embraces the infinite merit of the Redeemer, and leads us to renounce every other hope. (3.) Wherever faith is unfeigned, the genuine fruits of love will spring from it, and hereby it shall be proved and evidenced.

5. It was the more grievous for them to depart from the faith, whose beginnings had been so exceedingly promising. Ye did run well; who did hinder you from proceeding in the happy ways of the gospel, or has diverted you from your course, that ye should not obey the truth, which once you embraced? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you; these Judaizing sentiments I never taught you; and God, by his Spirit in the gospel, laid down a quite different method for your acceptance before him. Note, (1.) It should be matter of serious inquiry with backsliders, what has turned them aside, or retarded them in their Christian race? (2.) They who receive the truth in the light of it, must shew their love of it also by the unfeigned obedience of their hearts thereunto.

6. The insinuation of such dangerous tenets was likely to produce the most fatal effects. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Where once a departure from the principles of truth begins, like the plague, it spreads through the whole body; and one corrupt member in a church may communicate the most fatal and pernicious heresies to the whole.

7. The Apostle, notwithstanding the fears he could not but entertain, yet charitably expresses his confidence in many of them, that they would resist these innovations. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded, and cleave unshaken to the principles of the

6^b Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7ⁱ Be not deceived; God is not mocked:

^a Mat. 10. 10. Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 7—14. 1 Tim. 3. 2. & 5. 17, 18. & 3. 18. Eph. 5. 6. 2 Thes. 2. 3. 1 John, 3. 7. Jer. 37. 9. Jam. 1. 16.

¹ Job, 13. 9. Mat. 24. 4, 24. Luke, 21. 3. 1 Cor. 6. 9. & 15. 33.

the gospel: but he that troubleth you, (*Ὁ ταρασσών*), the arch-heretic, and author of these pernicious opinions, shall bear his judgment, and be laid under the just censures of the church, *whosoever he be*, however great and distinguished.

8. He exculpates himself from every insinuation, which these seducers suggested, as if he himself was of their sentiments. *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision as necessary to salvation, which they would make you believe, why do I yet suffer persecution from the Jewish zealots, my most envenomed foes? then is the offence of the cross ceased; if this were the case, there would be no reason for them to be any longer exasperated with me.* His sufferings, therefore, proved the zeal wherewith he opposed a notion so subversive of the fundamentals of Christianity.

9. He, with just indignation, expresses his earnest wish that these troublers of the church's peace had their deserts. *I would they were even cut off which trouble you*, excommunicated from the society of the faithful. *Note*, The troublers of the church's peace, who broach their destructive opinions, sow dissensions, and promote schisms in the undivided body of Christ, shall be severely dealt with in the day of recompence.

2dly, As the Apostle had before exhorted them to hold fast their liberty, he also teaches them wherein that liberty consisted. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh*, as if you were discharged from moral obligations, and might gratify the corrupt desires of the flesh and of the mind: *but the gospel of grace teaches us a different lesson, and engages us, by the most powerful principle, even by love, to serve one another, in every instance of brotherly affection, seeking to promote each other's temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests.* *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, all the precepts of the second table are summed up in one, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* *But if ye bite and devour one another*, disputing, reviling, and, with fierce contentions, like savage beasts, are exasperated against each other, *take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*, and forsaken of God, be given up to the evil of your own hearts, which must end in your ruin. *Note*, nothing tends to the destruction of Christianity so immediately, as dissensions among those who profess the faith of Christ.

3dly, The advice which St. Paul upon the whole gives, is as follows:

1. In general: *This I say then, walk in the Spirit*, under his blessed influence, dictates, and guidance, according to the gospel word, *and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*, be given up to the native corruptions of your heart: for there are two contending principles in the heart of every believer not perfected in love; *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, craving indulgence and gratification, *and the Spirit against the flesh*; opposing and mortifying its corrupt desires; *and these are contrary the one to the other*, in their nature, acting, and tendencies; *so that ye cannot do, or ye do*

not, the things that ye would; the workings of the old man, it is true, are checked and restrained by the power of divine grace, but not without opposition; and every real believer, who experiences justifying faith, is enabled, by the nobler and divine nature which he has received, to oppose and conquer his carnal will and affections, though the conflict is often sharp. *But if ye be led by the Spirit*, habitually under his influence, *ye are not under the law*, its condemnation is no longer dreaded, but ye are brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and walk in the light, as he is in the light.

2. He particularly enumerates those works of the flesh which must be avoided, and those gracious fruits of the Spirit which should be produced in their hearts by his divine operation. *Now*,

[1.] *The works of the flesh*, of the corrupt nature in fallen man, *are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness*, with every act of bodily pollution, or mental impurity; also, *idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings*, which more immediately are the iniquities of the carnal mind. Add to these the horrid crimes of *murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like* debaucheries and abominations; *of the which I tell you before the day of vengeance comes, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, unless they repent, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Reader, mark these awful words, so express, so full, so distinct. Examine thyself; is any one of these things allowed or indulged in thy heart or conduct? Then assuredly the wrath of God abideth on thee. *But*,

[2.] *The fruit of the Spirit*, which he produces in the souls of genuine believers, *is love to God and men, joy in God, through Jesus Christ; in his people who live to his glory; in his ordinances*, now become our delight; *peace of conscience, and peace with all mankind; long-suffering*, under all afflictive providences, or the provocations of the perverse; *gentleness of temper and manners towards every creature; goodness that makes us ready to every word and work for the benefit of others; faith and truth in all our promises, engagements, and dealings; meekness*, that is not easily provoked, and is instantly pacified; *temperance in all our desires, and in the use of every earthly enjoyment: against such dispositions, and those who are possessed of them, there is no law, nor any condemnation to be dreaded.*

3. *They that are Christ's*, in reality living members of his body mystical, will give demonstrative proof of the truth of their profession, by their spiritual practice; for they *have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*; their old man is nailed to their Redeemer's cross. And, while we are here in a state of warfare, *if we live in the Spirit*, actuated and influenced by his mighty energy, *let us also walk in the Spirit*, and act, according to our profession, as believers, and the obligations we are under to die daily unto sin, and to live unto righteousness. *Let us not be di-*
sious

^k for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

^k Luke, 16. 26. Rom. 2. 6—10. 2 Cor. 9. 6. 11. 3. 10, 11. Ver. 8. Rom. 8. 13. & 6. 23. & 2. 6—10. Jam. 3. 18.

8 For ^l he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth

^l Job, 4. 8. Prov. 11. 18. & 22. 8. Hof. 8. 7. & 10. 12. Amos, 6. 4, 6.

firos of vain-glory, puffed up with a high conceit of our attainments or performances, and affecting human approbation; *provoking one another* by a proud superciliousness; or *envying one another* for their superior gifts; tempers the most opposite and contradictory to the profession of Christianity. *Note*, (1.) All, who are truly Christ's, evidence it by their conduct; the same mind, in a measure, is in them, and they follow his steps; if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie. (2.) Only from pride cometh contention, envy, and every evil work; this must therefore be mortified and destroyed, or we cannot be saved.

CHAP. VI.

THE Apostle, in what follows, recommended to the spiritual men who were teachers in the Galatian churches, to restore by meek exhortations, and affectionate rebukes, those who were surprised into any fault, ver. 1.—And to sympathize with, and assist one another, in every distress, whereby they would fulfil Christ's law of love, ver. 2.—And because men's neglecting others in their distresses often proceeds from pride, or high opinion of themselves, the Apostle declared, that if any one, especially any teacher of religion, thinketh himself to be something, yet being nothing, inasmuch as he refuses to do works of love, or as all genuine good springs originally from the free grace of God, he deceiveth himself, ver. 3.—Wherefore, that the Galatian teachers might form a just judgment of themselves, the Apostle exhorted every one to try his own work; and if he found it good, he would have matter of rejoicing in what he is, through the grace of God, and not in the inferiority of others, ver. 4.—This, he informed them, was the true Christian spirit, because every one shall bear his own burden at the judgment, and be treated, not according to the opinion which he has of himself, or which others have of him, but according to what he really is, ver. 5.

Having thus instructed the teachers in their duty to the people, he shewed the people their duty to their teachers; for he commanded every one who was instructed in the word, to impart some share of the temporal good things which he enjoyed, to the person who instructed him, ver. 6.—And lest any of them might neglect to provide a proper maintenance for the ministers of the word, on the pretences which an immoderate selfishness is ready to suggest; he assured them, that, as certainly as men reap the kind of grain which they sow, ver. 7.—so certainly he, who neglecting the works of faith and love, soweth to his flesh, by employing himself in procuring the gratification of his fleshly appetites, shall, from such a course, reap corruption. Whereas he who soweth to the Spirit, the good seed of knowledge and holiness, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, ver. 8. And therefore he exhorted the Galatians, while they had opportunity, to do good to all, especially to them who were of the household of faith, ver.

9, 10.—Next, he desired them to consider what pains he had taken, in writing so large a letter to them with his own hand, to secure them against the sophistry of the false teachers, ver. 11.—And having mentioned these impostors, he could not finish his letter without observing, that the earnestness with which they pressed circumcision proceeded entirely from their desire to live in pleasure, and to avoid persecution for preaching salvation through a crucified Messiah, ver. 12.—To prove this, he assured the Galatians, that these circumcised teachers did not themselves keep the law; but they wished them to be circumcised, that they might boast among the unbelieving Jews of their having profolyted them to Judaism, ver. 13.—But, with respect to himself, he told them, that he had no worldly views whatever in converting them, through the grace of God, and never wished to boast in any thing, but in the doctrine of salvation through the cross of Christ, by which the world was crucified to him, and he to the world, ver. 14.—Then declared a second time, (see chap. v. 6.) that neither circumcision availeth any thing, as a preparation for eternal glory, nor uncircumcision, but an entire change of principles, dispositions, and actions, ver. 15.—And wished peace and mercy to all who earnestly followed that rule, and laboured, by the grace of God through faith, to be *new creatures*, and to be thereby of the *Israel of God*, and the spiritual seed of Abraham, to whom the promises belonged, ver. 16.—And having, in this Epistle, plainly declared, and fully established the doctrine of justification by faith, he forbade the false teachers to trouble him any more on account of that doctrine, as he bare on his body marks of his sufferings for the gospel, whereby his sincerity in the things which he preached was put beyond all doubt, ver. 17.—Then concluded with giving the Galatians his Apostolic benediction, ver. 18.

[*Ver. 1. Brethren, &c.*] The Apostle here exhorts the stronger to gentleness and meekness towards the weak: "If a man, by frailty or surprize, be overtaken in a fault, do you who are eminent in the church for knowledge, practice, and gifts, raise him up again, and set him aright with gentleness and meekness; *considering thyself.*" The sudden transition from the plural number to the singular, adds a great deal of beauty and force to the caution: for it is as if the Apostle had said, "Let every particular person among you remember, that *he* also may be in danger, through his own frailty; and by thus looking to himself, he will be induced to behave with greater tenderness and benevolence to others."

[*Ver. 2. Bear ye one another's burdens.*] "Bear with one another's infirmities; help to support each other, under the necessary burdens and evils of life;—and *fulfil the law of Christ.*" See Rom. xv. 1. and 1 Thess. v. 14. There were some among them very zealous for the law of Moses: St. Paul here puts them in mind of a law which they were under, and were obliged to observe; and he shews them how to do it; namely, by helping to bear one another's

to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And ^m let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 ⁿ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them

who are of ^o the household of faith.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a ^p fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

^m 1 Cor. 15. 58. & 3. 8. Mat. 24. 13. Rom. 12. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 16. 2 Thes. 3. 13. Heb. 3. 6, 14. & 10. 35, 39. Rev. 2. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26. & 3. 5, 12, 21. & 16. 15. & 22. 14. ⁿ John. 9. 4. & 12. 25. Rom. 12. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 8. & 6. 17. Tit. 3. 8, 14. Heb. 13. 16. Phil. 4. 8. Eph. 2. 10. ^o Eph. 2. 19. Heb. 6. 10. & 3. 1, 6, 14. ^p 2 Cor. 11. 13. Ch. 5. 11. & 2. 3, 14. Phil. 1. 15—18. & 2. 4.

another's burdens, and not by increasing their burdens by the observance of the Levitical law. See John, xiii. 34, 35.

Ver. 4, 5. *Shall be have rejoicing, &c.] Shall be have wherewith to rejoice.* The meaning of the passage is this: "Brethren, there are some among you who would bring others under the ritual observances of the *Mosaic law*; a yoke which was too heavy for us and our fathers to bear. They would do much better to ease the burdens of the weak; this is suitable to the *law of Christ*, which they are under, and is the law which they ought strictly to obey. If they think, because of their spiritual gifts, that they have power to prescribe in such matters, I tell them that they have not, and do but deceive themselves: let them rather take care of their own experience and practice, that they be right, and such as they ought to be; this will give them matter of rejoicing in themselves, and not vainly in others, as they do, when they prevail with them to be circumcised; for every man shall be answerable for his own actions, experience, and conduct, whether of an internal or external kind.

Ver. 6.] St. Paul having laid some restraint upon the authority and forwardness of the teachers and leading men among them, who were, as it seems, more ready to impose what they ought not on the Galatians, than to keep them forward in the practice of gospel obedience, he here takes care of them in respect of their maintenance; and exhorts the Galatians to liberality towards them, and in general towards all men, especially Christians, ver. 6—10. The word *communicate* here signifies to give liberally. All good things may imply, not only maintenance and subsistence, but likewise other branches of benevolence and respect.

Ver. 7. *Be not deceived;*] The Apostle here, with great propriety and force, exposes the evasions that some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of liberality; by which, however they might impose on others, they would egregiously deceive themselves, as every circumstance lies open to an all seeing God, and they assuredly should reap according as they sowed; (a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite to liberality, 2 Cor. ix. 6.) the thought whereof must silence every vain pretence that may be brought against so plain a duty, and is most admirably suited to regulate and heighten the proportion, as well as to enforce the practice of it.

Ver. 10. *Unto them who are of the household of faith.]* "To them who are united to us in the bonds of Christian faith and love; and who, on that account, as belonging to one family, and heirs of the same hope, have certainly the first claim to our regard and assistance."

Ver. 11. *Ye see how large a letter, &c.]* The original has been taken in different senses by interpreters, both ancient and modern. The Vulgate has it, *with what letters*; Castalio, *with how many letters*; Erasmus, *how large a letter*; and Beza, *how long a letter*. St. Paul mentions his writing *with his own hand*, as an argument of his great regard for the Galatians. And, as it was not usual for him to write his Epistles with his own hand, excepting the conclusion, or some important sentence, he might very well say, that, in comparison with his usual custom, he had written *a very large letter*, and might urge the largeness of the letter as a proof of his sincere regard for their interest.

Ver. 12. *Only lest they should suffer persecution]* This seems to open the main secret spring of that zeal for the Jewish ceremonies in some who professed themselves Christians, which occasioned so much uneasiness in the apostolic churches. The persecuting edicts of the Jewish Sanhedrim, whose influence extended to remote synagogues, had induced many, who secretly believed in Christ, to decline an open acknowledgment of him: (see John, ix. 22. xii. 42. xix. 38.) But afterwards, when a scheme arose for blending Judaism with Christianity, it might be supposed that this would blunt the edge of persecution, especially with respect to those who urged the Gentile converts to conform to the Jewish rites. St. Jerome observes, that Tiberius and Caius Cæsar made laws to authorize the Jews who were dispersed throughout the Roman empire, to follow the rites of their religion, and the ceremonies transmitted from their fathers. *Circumcised Christians* were therefore, by the Pagans, looked upon as *Jews*; while those who made profession of the Gospel, and were not circumcised, were violently persecuted, both by Pagans and Jews. Nay, the Jews even took the pains to send persons into all countries, to accuse the Christians of atheism and other crimes, to make them as odious as they could, and subject them to the cognizance and punishment of the civil magistrate. To avoid all these inconveniences, some pusillanimous Christians conformed to the Jewish ceremonies; and though they did not choose to renounce Christianity,

13 For ^a neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that ^b I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by ^c whom the world ^d is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 ^e For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision

availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And ^f as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth ^g let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, ^h the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

^a Mat. 23. 3, 15, 23. Rom. 2. 17—24. & 3. 9—18. with Acts, 20. 30. 2 Pet. 2. 19. ^b If. 45. 24, 25. Phil. 1. 20. & 1. 3, 7—11. 1 Cor. 1. 23. & 2. 2. Rom. 1. 16. or Col. 1. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. & 11. 23—27. ^c Or *whom*. ^d Rom. 6. 4. 6. & 7. 4. Ch. 1. 3. & 2. 20. 1 John, 5. 5. Rom. 8. 37. ^e 1 Cor. 7. 19. Ch. 5. 6. & 3. 26, 28. Col. 3. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17. Mat. 12. 50. John, 15. 14. Eph. 2. 10. John, 3. 3, 5, 6. ^f Phil. 3. 16, 3. Pf. 125. 5. Rom. 2. 28, 29. & 4. 12. & 9. 6—8, 24. & 10. 12. & 3. 29, 30. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Heb. 3. 1. If. 45. 25. Ch. 3. 7. ^g Ch. 5. 11. with 2 Cor. 1. 5, 8. & 4. 10, 11. & 11. 23—27. Col. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 3. 11, 12. 1 Cor. 4. 9—13. ^h See Rom. 16. 20, 24. 2 Cor. 13. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 22. Philem. 25.

Christianity, yet they were, to all outward appearance, the professors of a religion which Christianity was to abolish, and with which it was incompatible.

Ver. 13. *That they may glory in your flesh.*] “May glory in this mark of circumcision, fixed in your flesh, and boast of the many converts to Judaism which they have had the interest and address to make.” See on ver. 4, 5.

Ver. 15. *But a new creature.*] *Καὶνὴ κτίσις*, a new creation;—which strongly impresses the greatness of the change made in men by Christianity, thoroughly and experimentally entertained.

Ver. 16. *And as many as walk, &c.*] St. Paul having asserted, in the foregoing verse, that it is the *new creation* alone which qualifies men to be proper members of the kingdom of Christ, and puts them into the possession of the privileges thereof, this verse may be understood also as assertory,—*peace shall be on them*, rather than as a prayer, unless there were a verb which expressed it;—especially considering that he writes this Epistle to encourage them to refuse circumcision.—To which end, the assuring them that those who do so *shall have peace and mercy from God*, is of more force than to tell them, he prays that they may have peace and mercy. And for the same reason I understand the *Israel of God* to be the same with *those who walk by this rule*, though joined with them by the copulative *and*; which is no very unusual way of speaking.

Ver. 17. *I bear in my body*] Archbishop Potter thinks, that the Apostle here alludes to the *σηματά*, or brands, with which the Greeks used to mark those who were appointed to serve in the wars, lest they should attempt to make their escape. Others suppose, that the reference may be to those marks by which the votaries of particular heathen deities were distinguished. Mr. Blackwall considers it as an allusion to an Egyptian custom; according to which, any man's servant who fled to the temple of

Hercules, and had the sacred brands or marks of that Pagan deity impressed upon him, was supposed to be under his immediate care and protection, and by that to be privileged from all violence and harsh treatment. In this view St. Paul's words are to be understood thus: “Let no man who professes veneration and faith in our common Saviour, give me, his fellow-servant, any disturbance or vexation, in the course of my ministry, and discharge of my duty, since I bear in my body his sacred marks:—the bruises and impressions of violence and cruelty, which I have received in his glorious service, will be upon me till I go down to the grave; therefore I esteem myself as sacred and devoted to my divine Master; and may as justly claim the civility and charity of all the worshippers and lovers of the Lord Jesus in sincerity, as I firmly hope and depend on the gracious acceptance and protection of our great Lord himself.”

Inferences.—The exhortations here urged by the Apostle cannot be expressed in more lively terms, and it is scarcely possible to present them in clearer and plainer language. The great difficulty here, and in other such instances, is, to bring our hearts to submit to what our understandings must so readily apprehend and approve. Let us earnestly pray, that God would diffuse more of his Spirit on all professing Christians; that, beholding each other with undisssembled and fervent love, every one may affectionately endeavour to advance the happiness of all: and, instead of severely censuring one another, let us endeavour for mutual reformation, by such exhortations and advices as different circumstances may require, doing all in the spirit of Christian meekness, and in a humble sense of our own infirmities.

There is as certain a connection between our conduct here and our state hereafter, as there is between the kind of grain sown and the harvest to be reaped from it. The generality,

* See Locke, Taylor, Michaelis, Leshner, Wall, Hammond, Calmet, Henry, Tillotson, Heylin, Clarke, Grotius, Wells, Bengelius, Lyttleton, Doddridge, Whitfius, Whitby, Hardouin, Jefferys, Wolfius, Wetstein, Beza, Baxter, Warburton, Peter Whitfield, Diodati, Howe, Burnet, Bedford, Mintert, Mill, Castalio, Selden, Dr. Chandler, Bishop Chandler, Markland, Bowyer, Peirce, Sharpe, Sykes, Le Clerc, Hallett, Weiton, Blackwall, Ward, Jortin, and Potter.

generality, alas! are sowing to the flesh, and the harvest to such will be shame and corruption. Let us, then, for our parts, sow to the Spirit, liberally and largely, and have our fruit unto holiness, that so we may at length inherit everlasting life: and whenever we may be ready to faint under our toil, let us encourage ourselves and each other with the blessed prospect of that day, when, though the seed-time may be attended with tears, we may come again rejoicing, and bring with us rich sheaves of honour and of joy. Pf. cxxvi. 5, 6. It is in due season, it is at the time which God hath wisely appointed, that we shall, if faithful, receive this reward of grace; let us then wait for it, as we well may, with patience and humility.

The day is coming, when every one shall bear his own burden, and each of us shall answer for himself:—that awful day, when every one shall reap the fruit of his own way, and receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10. Be it our care, therefore, not to deceive ourselves with a vain imagination, that we are something when we are nothing; and not be so satisfied to rest in the good opinion which others have of us, as to have our rejoicing in them. Whatever duty may be required of us, let us not amuse ourselves with trifling excuses, which never can deceive that God who is not to be mocked; but earnestly set ourselves continually to cultivate true inward religion, even that of the heart, in the sight of Him who searcheth it; so will the testimony of our conscience be a source of joy, and we shall find that joy solid and permanent.

Nor, if God bless the ministers of his gospel, as the instruments of bringing this joy to the soul, will it fail of being attended with that readiness which the Apostle requires, to communicate to them in all good things? while, if they understand their character and office, there will be in them that moderation and desire, on the one hand, and that zeal and love for souls on the other, which will render it a thousand times more pleasant to communicate spirituals, than to receive temporals, even from those who give with the most willing mind, and so double the gift, whether it be greater or less.

What meanness is there in those views, or objects, in which the generality of mankind are so apt to glory! How little satisfaction can there be in making proselytes to a party, and spreading forms and notions, when compared with the joy of promoting true religion in the hearts of men, and thereby advancing the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls! And of what little service will it be to make a fair appearance, and to be zealous for the externals of religion, so as to gain the applause of men, and to have many followers, if, at the same time, we have so little veneration for the cross of Christ, as to be afraid or ashamed of owning the necessity of relying on his cross—his sufferings unto death, and infinite merit alone, for justification, lest we should suffer persecution upon that account, or be exposed to the reproaches of the world about us!

May divine grace teach us to esteem the cross of Christ more highly, and to glory in nothing but our knowledge of it, and our hopes and expectations from it! May we all feel its vital efficacy, to crucify us to the world, and the world to us; that we may look upon the world but as a thing dead and worthless, which neither can afford us any

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advantage, nor yield any pleasure to engage our hearts to choose it for our portion. Thus, being crucified and dead to all things in it, may we be so entirely weaned from all affection thereto, as to make it no more our principal design and study to pursue it: but, being indifferent both to its smiles and frowns, may we be neither moved by any prospect of self-interest on the one hand, nor terrified by the fear of persecution on the other!

Nor let us lay the stress of our religion on the name we bear, or ground the hope of our acceptance on being of this or that denomination of Christians.—Let it rather be our chief concern to experience a thorough change of heart and life, and to obtain that renovation of soul, that new creation, without which neither circumcision nor uncircumcision can avail any thing, and with which the one as well as the other will be accepted of God.

It is the written word of God which is the rule that we are to go by, both in the doctrines and precepts of it: let us be careful to walk according to it, and perseveringly regulate our principles and conduct by its sacred institutes: then will God acknowledge us as his true Israel, and mercy and peace shall crown our Christian warfare. And surely, how diligently soever we observe this rule, how exactly soever we conform to its direction, how much soever we may suffer for our adherence to it, yet still we depend upon mercy for the communication of peace, and must ascribe all our hopes of happiness to pardoning clemency and free grace. May that grace ever be with our spirit, to sanctify, to quicken, and to cheer us; and may we always be ready to maintain the honour of that, which is, indeed, our very life. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. As he had so warmly recommended to them that love which would engage them to serve one another, he passes on to the exercise of it, in several instances.

1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, through surprise, temptation, or human frailty, ye which are spiritual, and strong in the grace which is in Jesus Christ, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, with all the tenderness with which an able surgeon handles a dislocated joint, in order to reduce it; using, not rough reproaches, but tender expostulations; considering thyself, as no man is secure, lest thou also be tempted, and suffered to fall, to punish the undue severity you may have used towards others, and justly to smart under the same scourge. Note, (1.) A sense of our own weakness will make us compassionate an offending brother. (2.) Peculiar tenderness is needful, when the soul is already vexed and grieved by sin, lest we drive those to despair whom we should lead to repentance. (3.) Angry reproofs, however great the provocation may be, never can do good.

2. Bear ye one another's burdens, sympathizing with the afflicted, patient with the infirmities of the weak, and desirous to alleviate every grief under which your brethren groan, by your prayers, your counsel, or your substance; and so fulfil the law of Christ, that law of love, which he has taught both by precept and example.

3. In humility, every man should watch over, and examine himself. For if a man think himself to be something extraordinary, and self-sufficient to withstand every temptation, when, in fact, he is nothing, and has no strength of his own which he does not derive from Christ, he deceiveth

himself, as he will find, by dire experience, when he comes to be tried. *But let every man prove his own work, examining into his principles and practice according to the gospel rule; and then, if he find a happy correspondence between them, shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; he will exult in the blessed testimony of the Spirit and his own conscience, ascribing to the grace of God what has been wrought in him; and will seek no glory from human applause, nor desire to rake up the faults of others, as a foil to set off his own excellencies; satisfied, if God in Christ Jesus accepts and approves his services. For every man shall bear his own burden, and stand or fall, not according to the opinion he has entertained of himself, or which others form of him, but according to the decision of the eternal Judge.* *Note, (1.) A high opinion of ourselves ever argues great ignorance of our own hearts. (2.) The testimony of a good conscience is matter of solid satisfaction.*

4. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things, contributing liberally and cheerfully to the support of a gospel ministry, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Be not deceived by your deluding teachers, who would engross your regard, nor by the covetousness of your own hearts, which would divert you from this or any other instance of liberality; God is not to be mocked by vain pretences; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, according to his work will be his wages. For he that soweth to his flesh, making provision for it to fulfil the lusts thereof, or inordinately anxious to hoard up worldly wealth, to the defrauding of God's cause, or the poor, such a man shall of the flesh reap corruption; his perishing acquisitions will soon be fled, and endless misery succeed: but he that soweth to the Spirit, in every instance of bounty and benevolence, under the Spirit's guidance, laying out himself, his time, his talents, perseveringly, for the glory of Christ, and the good of his people, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting, and, in eternity, receive the blessed recompence of his deeds. And let us not be weary in well-doing, though we may not see all the happy effects that we expected; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Nothing can be lost which is employed in God's service; though, like the seed under the clod, it may seem to be buried for a while, it will surely spring up, and afford a plentiful increase, often in this world, and to the faithful soul always in a better.*

5. This is the day for labour; therefore we should diligently improve it. *And, as we have opportunity, let us, according to our abilities, do good unto all men, with liberal hearts and open hands, not restraining our charity to any party, or nation; though especially exercising it unto them who are of the household of faith, for whom we are bound, by peculiar ties of love and duty, particularly to interest ourselves, as children of the same family, and heirs of the same inheritance.*

2dly, Though in his other Epistles he usually employed an amanuensis, yet, out of his great affection to the church of Galatia, he wrote this long letter on so important a subject with his own hand. And now, being about to conclude, he

1. Marks out to them the true character of their seducing teachers, that they may beware of them. *As*

many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, and, by their pompous professions and zeal for the ceremonials of religion, would insinuate themselves into your confidence, they constrain you to be circumcised, and urge this upon you as necessary to salvation, when, in fact, their design is not your good, but their own ease and honour; for they do it only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, from the furious zealots for Judaism, who cannot bear the doctrine of free justification through faith in Christ alone, without circumcision or the works of the law: for, eager as they are for your submitting to this rite, neither they themselves, who are circumcised, keep the law in its moral purity, rigidly as they are attached to the ceremonials of it; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh, and make a merit of it with their countrymen, that you are their profelytes to circumcision. *Note, (1.) They who are ashamed of the cross, are assuredly the enemies of Christ. (2.) Many make their boast of the form of religion, who are the greatest strangers to the power of it.*

2. He declares to them his own temper and conduct. *What the false teachers were ashamed of, he gloried in: God forbid that I should glory in external privileges, attainments, gifts, duties, or any thing else, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that atoning sacrifice which he there offered, as my whole dependance for pardon and acceptance with God; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world; through faith in him I am mortified to all its allurements, honours, and interests, and content to be treated with that contempt and virulent enmity which, for the truth's sake, I suffer from a world that lieth in wickedness.* *Note, (1.) The cross is the glorious object ever in the Christian's eye; for to the sacrifice there offered he is indebted for all his hopes in time and eternity. (2.) Faith in a crucified Jesus is the victory that overcometh the world, and nothing else can enable us to do it.*

3. He lays down the essential point of true Christianity. *For in Christ Jesus, with regard to the salvation which is in and from him, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; the one is no advantage, the other no obstruction: but that which must prove our interest in Christ, and that we are partakers of the grace of God in truth, is our becoming new creatures, having our principles, tempers, and conduct, cast into the mould of the gospel, through the mighty energy of faith, which worketh by love.*

4. He offers up his prayers for those who held fast the truth, and gives them encouragement. *As many as walk according to this rule, laid down in this Epistle, with regard to justification by faith, and the new creature, without respect to circumcision, or uncircumcision, peace be on them, or peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God; may they enjoy peace with God, and in their own consciences, and every divine mercy which is purchased by the crucified Jesus for his faithful people, who, whether Jews or Gentiles, are God's spiritual Israel. See the Annotations.*

5. He, with authority, enjoins them to give him no farther trouble on this point, but to submit to his apostolic warnings and reproofs. *From henceforth let no man trouble me with farther disputes and contentions, or with injurious reproaches, as if I had ever countenanced the doctrine of these Judaizing teachers; the contrary of which*

is most evident: I have ever opposed them, and severely suffered for it; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, the scars of the wounds and stripes endured for his sake, the signs of my conformity to him, and of my adherence to the offensive doctrines of his cross, and particularly of Justification by faith alone. *Note,* It is a proof that we believe the doctrines we preach, when we dare boldly suffer for them, and can produce the glorious scars received in the service of the Captain of our salvation.

6. He concludes with his usual benediction. *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen!* The treatment which he had received from them, did not quench his love towards them. Earnest to promote their salvation, he prays that they may experience the inestimably precious love of a dying Redeemer, and partake of all the invaluable privileges which he freely bestows on his faithful saints, even pardon, peace, comfort, holiness, and eternal life.

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
EPHESIANS.

P R E F A C E.

IN this Epistle St. Paul inculcates the most important doctrines of religion, and the most sacred duties of Christian morals. It seems as if he had written it with an intention of composing a complete Treatise on the Church, and to clear up the chief questions which might arise upon a subject so important, and which includes so many others. We observe him speaking of the Church in almost every chapter, and keeping it in view throughout the whole Epistle. He begins by considering its origin; after which he speaks of the Head of the Church; and teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head, and that the Church is his Body. This is the subject of the first chapter. And herein St. Paul demonstrates, that the Church, properly so called, consists not in that confused assemblage of people, who appear together in outward communion; but of those only who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost; because of such holy and living members alone can a body be formed, which has the honour to be the body of Jesus Christ, and from him, as its mystical Head, to receive life, motion, and being. The second chapter is employed in shewing, first, what is the natural condition, not only of mankind universally, but even of those who have accepted of the offers of grace, and yield to be saved through the alone merit of Jesus, and by the alone power of his Spirit: they were, by mere nature, dead in trespasses and sins, but are now quickened by the Spirit of Christ: they were children of wrath, but are now adopted into the family of God.

The rest of the chapter treats of the extent of the new Dispensation, which proposes the highest privileges of grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

The Apostle continues, in the third chapter, to speak of the calling of the Gentiles, that great stumbling-block to the Jews, who would not believe that these nations, who for so many ages had been kept from any visible alliance with God, should now, equally with the seed of the patriarchs, enjoy the rights and privileges of the gospel. St. Paul then goes on to prove, in the fourth chapter, the unity of the Church; and to shew that, of whatever nations it may consist, and in whatever countries subsisting, there are not many Churches, but ONE, worshipping every where one only God, having one only Saviour, animated by one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, ch. iv. 4, 5. He next speaks of the ministry established by the Lord Jesus Christ, for the conversion of the nations, and for instructing and consoling the Church; after which, at the end of this chapter, and in the two following,

lowing, he insists upon the most important duties of believers : he shews, that the most essential characteristic of the Church is holiness ; and hereupon sets forth the combats the Church has to sustain, the difficulties to overcome, and the necessity of calling forth all her courage and resolution for withstanding the repeated and violent attacks of her enemies. To this end, he furnishes the believer with every weapon, every means that may tend to make victory easy ; and, as he himself was then engaged with the enemy, who kept him in bonds, (for the Apostle was in prison at Rome when he wrote this Epistle,) he beseeches the Ephesians to fight with him by their prayers ; and concludes, as his custom is, with ardent wishes for the Church, and for all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. I.

After the salutation, and thanksgiving for the Ephesians, he treateth of election and adoption by grace : and, because the height of this mystery cannot easily be attained unto, he prayeth that they may come to the full knowledge and possession thereof in Christ.

[Anno Domini 62.]

PAUL, ^a an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to ^b the saints which are at

Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus :

2 ^c Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 ^d Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ^e hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly ^{*} places in Christ :

^a Acts, 13. 9. with 9, 3, 15. Rom. 1. 1, 5. 1 Cor. 1. 1. & 15. 8—10. Gal. 1. 15, 16. Col. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 1. ^b 2 Cor. 3. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 2. & 4. 17. Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. Ch. 2. 10. 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 12. & 2. 1. ^c See Rom. 1. 7. Gal. 1. 3. 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 1. Tit. 1. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. ^d 2 Cor. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Ver. 17. Mat. 27. 46. John, 20. 17. Heb. 1. 9. Pf. 45. 7. Is. 49. 4, 5. ^e Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 18. Rom. 8. 30. 32. Ver. 4—11. Ch. 2. 4—10. Pf. 72. 17. with Lev. 26. 4. Deut. 2. 7. & 7. 13. & S. 7. & 28. 2. ^{*} Or things.

CHAP. I.

BECAUSE the Ephesians, in their heathen state, had held the mysteries of their idol gods in the highest veneration, on account of the supposed importance of the discoveries which were made in them to the initiated ; and because they esteemed the initiated, on account of these discoveries, more honourable and happy than the rest of mankind, the Apostle began this Epistle with displaying the great dignity and happiness of the members of the Christian church, whether Jews or Gentiles ; not by a formal declaration of their honours and privileges, but by thanksgivings to God, for having bestowed these great honours and privileges on them. Thus, first of all, he thanked God for his having blessed the Gentiles with every spiritual blessing in the Christian church, equally with the Jews, although they did not obey the law of Moses, ver. 3.—And, because the Judaizing teachers affirmed, that this was contrary to God's purpose respecting the Jews, the Apostle, in his thanksgiving, took notice, that God had bestowed these blessings on the Gentiles, as well as on the Jews, agreeably to an election of them before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy through love to God, on account of his great goodness to them, and through love to man from a regard to the commandment of God, ver. 4.—Next, he thanked God for having predestinated holy persons, of all nations, to be his own children ; that is, to be the objects of his love, and the heirs of his happiness, not through obedience to the law of Moses, but through faith in Jesus Christ, agreeably to his own benevolence, ver. 5.—which is now made known by the gospel, in order that men may

gratefully praise him for his goodness, which is admirably displayed by the great favour shewn to them on account of his beloved Son, ver. 6.—by whose blood, or death, and not through the sacrifices either of Judaism or of Heathenism, we, his Sons, shall obtain redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the greatness of his goodness, ver. 7.—the knowledge of which, St. Paul told the Ephesians, God had made to abound in all genuine Christians, particularly in the apostles, together with sufficient wisdom and prudence to fit them for publishing it to the world, ver. 8.

Having mentioned the knowledge of the goodness of God in the redemption, St. Paul blessed God particularly for having made known to them the mystery of his will concerning his pardoning sins through the blood of Christ, and his making the Gentiles heirs of the inheritance of heaven, through faith, equally with the Jews, agreeably to his own benevolent purpose, which he had formed from the beginning, of his own accord, ver. 9.—Here it is proper to observe, that the riches of God's goodness, in resolving to pardon men's sins through the blood, or death of his Son, and to bestow that great blessing on the Gentiles equally with the Jews, are called, in this place, *the mystery of God's will*, because these things had hitherto been kept secret, Rom. xvi. 25, and because they were discoveries of infinitely greater importance to mankind, and much more certain, than all the discoveries made to the initiated, in the most famed of the heathen mysteries. May we not, therefore, suppose, that this honourable appellation was given by the Apostle to the gospel, to render it venerable in the eyes of the Ephesians, and of all the Gentiles, who admired the heathen mysteries ?—Farther, the Apostle told

4 According as he^s hath chosen us in him should be holy and without blame before him before the foundation of the world, that we in love:

^f Rom. 8. 29, 30. 1 Pet. 1. 2. & 2. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 9. & 2. 10, 19. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Jam. 2. 5. Ch. 3. 11. & 5. 27. Luke, 1. 5. Col. 1. 22. Tit. 2. 12, 14. Mat. 20. 16. & 22. 14. John, 15. 16.

told them, that God's benevolent intention, in making known to him, and to his brethren apostles, the mystery of his will, was, that, by their publishing it to the world, he might, in the gospel dispensation, gather together Jews and Gentiles into one church, or fellowship, under Christ, ver. 10.—That by faith in him, and not by obedience to the law of Moses, the Jews themselves might inherit the blessings promised in the covenant to the spiritual seed of Abraham; to which blessings he had predestinated believers of all nations, agreeably to his purpose, who bringeth all things to pass, not according to the will of any man, or body of men, but according to his own sovereign pleasure, ver. 11.—And, in particular, that the believing Jews might occasion praise to God for his goodness and truth in the performance of his promises, by receiving the inheritance as a free gift through faith, and not as a debt through the law, ver. 12.—By whom, (namely, by the Christ,) ye Gentiles also have inherited the promises made to the spiritual seed of Abraham, having believed the word of truth, even the good news of your salvation, which was preached to you: by whom, also, after ye believed, ye were sealed as God's children and heirs, with the Holy Spirit; so that ye can have no doubt of your salvation being by faith, without obedience to the law of Moses, ver. 13.—Which Holy Spirit, therefore, to believers, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, is the earnest, or assurance, that the inheritance shall be bestowed on the faithful; and is to continue in the church until the complete redemption of the faithful saints—a redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, and consummated at the general resurrection, ver. 14.—Thus it appears, that the honours and privileges belonging to believers, as the children of God, and as members of the Christian church, or fellowship, are infinitely greater and more valuable than those of which the initiated, or members of the heathen fellowships, boasted.

After displaying the great excellency of the gospel revelation, and the honours and privileges belonging to the members of the Christian church, and tacitly contrasting these with the heathen mysteries, and with the privileges of the initiated, the Apostle told the Ephesians, that the good news which he had received of their faith and love, made him daily give thanks to God on account of their happy state, ver. 15, 16.—and pray to God to give them both true wisdom and revealed knowledge, in order that they might continue to acknowledge Christ as their Saviour, notwithstanding they should be persecuted for so doing, ver. 17.—also that he would enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they might know the greatness of those privileges, which, by calling them into his fellowship, he had taught them to expect; and know likewise the glory of the inheritance which he had prepared for his children, the saints, ver. 18.—and what the exceeding greatness of his power is, with respect to his faithful people, in making them at present alive from their trespasses and sins, (chap. ii. 5.) and in raising them hereafter from the dead to enjoy the inheritance; of which power, the

Apostle told them, God hath already given an illustrious example, in raising Christ, the head of the Christian fellowship, from the dead, and setting him down at his own right hand, ver. 19, 20.—far above all the different orders of angels in heaven, and potentates on earth, ver. 21.—and hath subjected all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head over all things for the benefit of the church, ver. 22.—which being animated, governed, and protected by him, as the human body is by its head, it is his body, by which his character, as Lord and Saviour of the church, or Christian fellowship, is rendered complete, and is filled by him with all manner of gifts and graces, in order that every member of his body, or fellowship, may grow, under him, in perfection and happiness, ver. 23.

This sublime account of the resurrection of Christ, the head of the Christian church, or fellowship; and of God's setting him down, in his mediatorial character, at his own right hand, as ruler both of the angelical hosts, and of the princes and potentates on earth; and of his putting all things under his feet; and of his making him head over all things for the benefit of the church; and of his being rendered complete, as the head of the Christian fellowship, by the union of its members to him; and of his making them alive from the death of sin; and of his filling them with miraculous gifts and moral graces, was, I think, designed by the Apostle as a contrast, first, to the character and powers of the false gods, worshipped by the heathens as the heads of their fellowships; and, secondly, to the honours, advantages, and privileges which the initiated derived from their participation in these mysteries; and all with a view to make the Ephesians sensible how far inferior, in dignity and happiness, the members of the heathen fellowships were, to the members of the Christian church, which is a fellowship protected and governed by so high and powerful a head as Christ; whom God hath raised, as Mediator in his glorified humanity, to the government of the universe, for the purpose of making the faithful members of this noble fellowship holy and happy through all eternity.

EPHESIANS.] St. Paul passed through Ephesus in the year 54, but without making any stay: the following year he returned thither again, and stayed three years. During his abode there, he completed a very flourishing church of Christians, the first foundations of which had been laid by some inferior teachers. As Ephesus was frequented by persons of distinction from all parts of Asia Minor, St. Paul took the opportunity of preaching in the adjacent countries; and the other churches of Asia were considered as the daughters of the church of Ephesus: so that an Epistle to the *Ephesians* was, in effect, an Epistle to the other churches of Asia at the same time. St. Paul was carried prisoner to Rome, for the first time, in the year 61; and, during his confinement there, which was not very close, he wrote the Epistles to Philemon, the Colossians, the Ephesians, and the Philippians. Hence all these Epistles bear a great resemblance in their style and manner.

This

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

† Rom. 8. 29, 30, 15—17. † Mt. 11. 25, 26. † Luke, 12. 32. † John, 1. 12. † 1 Cor. 1. 21. † 2 Cor. 6. 12. & 7. 1. † Gal. 4. 5, 6. † John, 3. 1. † Pl. 4. 7. & 13. 4. † Il. 45. 21. † 1 Pet. 2. 9. † Deut. 32. 9. † John, 17. 9. † Acts, 9. 15. † Rom. 11. 4. † Ver. 6. 12—14. † Rom. 9. 11. † Jer. 1. 5. & 3. 19. † 32. 41.

This Epistle was intended to establish the Ephesians in the faith; and, for that purpose, to give them more exalted views of the love of God, and of the excellency and dignity of Jesus Christ; to shew them, that they were saved by grace; and that the Gentiles, however wretched they had been once, now enjoyed equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them by declaring, with what steadiness the Apostle himself suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it: and, finally, to engage them to the practice of those duties which became them as Christians. The city of Ephesus was distinguished by peculiar vices and sins, which are alluded to in this Epistle, and in those to Timothy. *First*, it was the genuine seat of the idolatrous worship of Diana, who was called *Σαῦρα*, or, “The Saviour-Goddess;” in opposition to which St. Paul calls the true Deity *Σαῦς*, or, “The Saviour-God,” in his first Epistle to Timothy, ch. i. 1. *ii. 3.* *Secondly*, the Ephesians were remarkable for the practice of superstitious arts, Acts, xix. 18, 19. *Thirdly*, they were peculiarly vain in their dress, 1 Tim. ii. 9. *10.* *Fourthly*, they were remarkable for lewdness and drunkenness, and gloried in obscenity of language, Ephes. v. Michaelis thinks that the Christians of Ephesus were also tainted with the errors of the *Effenes*; an account of which I shall give in my notes on the first Epistle to Timothy. If it be remembered, that the most flourishing sects of philosophers were settled in this place, and in its neighbourhood; that Pythagoras was here; that Samos, where he was born, was an island of Ionia; and that the followers of Parmenides, Zeno, and Democritus, were to be found there, even in the time of Chrysostom; it is not to be doubted that the Apostle would make use of extraordinary caution in writing; and it is evident that this Epistle is full of the sublimest doctrines, and written in a style equal to the nobleness of his sentiments, and the learning of those to whom it was addressed. Though this, perhaps, at first sight, may render his meaning a little obscure, yet, by the assistance of the two following Epistles,—which were both written while he was in the same circumstances, upon the same occasion, and to the same purpose;—the sense and doctrine of the Apostle here may be so clearly seen, and so perfectly comprehended, that there can be hardly any doubt left about it, to any one who will examine them diligently, and carefully compare them together.

Ver. 1. To the faithful in Christ Jesus :] Some have understood this as an intimation, that the Christians at Ephesus were remarkably *faithful to Christ* in relying on him alone for salvation, without that attachment to the *Mosaic law* which was to be found in some other churches, and particularly among the Galatians. But as he uses the *same title* when addressing the Colossians (Col. i. 2.), whom yet he reproves on this very account (Col. ii. 16, 20.), I can lay no stress upon that criticism.

Ver. 3.] The two first verses contain St. Paul’s inscription, or introduction, to his Epistle; and thence to verse 14. he proceeds to thank God for his grace and bounty to the Gentiles; wherein he so sets forth both God’s gracious purpose of bringing the Gentiles into his kingdom under the Messiah, and his actual bestowing on them blessings of all kinds in Jesus Christ, for their complete reinstatement in that his heavenly kingdom, that there could be nothing stronger suggested to make the Ephesians, and other Gentiles, converts, give up all thoughts of the Mosaic law; and that such inferior kingdom of his, established upon the Mosaic institution, and adapted to a little canton of the earth, and a small tribe of men; as not necessary to be retained under this more spiritual institution, and celestial kingdom, erected under Jesus Christ;—a kingdom intended to comprehend men of all nations, and to extend itself to the utmost bounds of the earth, for the greater honour of God, or, as St. Paul speaks, *to the praise of his glory.*

Blessed be the God, &c.] The sentence before us runs through twelve verses; a length of period remarkable even in St. Paul’s writings, which are frequently difficult to be fully understood on that account. Under the words *us* and *we*, in this period, the Apostle doubtless includes the Ephesians, to whom he wrote,—the greatest part of whom were Gentile converts,—as sharing with *him and the Jewish Christians* in their evangelical privileges; and by thus beginning his Epistle with ascribing thanks to God for his mercies to them, he at once declares his firm persuasion of the calling of the Gentiles, and his hearty joy for it. We have before observed, that it is frequent with this Apostle, to make use of the same words in the same sentence in a different sense from that in which they occurred before. Thus, the word *blest*, in the beginning of this verse, signifies *to praise*; and in the next clause, *to do good*, or, “to confer a blessing upon:”—and for this reason,—that both of them are the effects of a benevolent mind. *All spiritual blessings* principally refer, not to extraordinary and miraculous gifts, but to the sanctifying and saving graces of the Spirit; such as justification by grace, the adoption of children, the illumination of the Spirit, and all the graces of the Christian life: these are *blessings in the heavens*, *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*, or, *in heavenly things*, as it should be rendered, rather than *places*; as they are things which have a manifest relation to heaven, and a tendency to fit us for it.

Ver. 4. In him] That is, *in Christ*. See the preceding verse, which, together with this, makes up the following sense: “As it was in consideration of Christ alone that God heretofore, before the foundation of the world, designed us Gentiles to be his people; so now that the Messiah is come, all the blessings and benefits which we are to receive in his heavenly kingdom, are laid up in him, and to be had only by our faith and dependance on him, without any respect to the law of Moses.” The Apostle cannot

6^b To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath^l made us accepted in^k the beloved.

7^l In whom we have redemption through his blood, the^m forgiveness of sins; according to theⁿ riches of his grace :

8^o Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence ;

9^p Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, ^q according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself :

^a Ver. 12, 14. Ch. 2. 7. & 3. 21. 1 Pet. 4. 11. If. 43. 21. Rom. 9. 23. Luke, 2. 14. Pf. 115. 1. & 107. 1, 2, 8. ^b If. 45. 24, 25. Jer. 23. 6. Rom. 3. 24. & 5. 15—19. 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^c Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Prov. 8. 30. 31. If. 42. 1. & 49. 1—3. Zech. 13. 7. Col. 1. 13. John, 3. 35. & 10. 17. ^d Mat. 20. 28. & 26. 28. Acts, 27. 28. Rom. 3. 24—26. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Col. 1—14. Heb. 9. 12, 14, 15. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. 1 John, 2. 2. Rev. 5. 9. ^e Luke, 1. 77. Acts, 10. 43. Col. 2. 13. ^f Ch. 2. 7. & 3. 8. 16. Phil. 4. 19. Rom. 9. 23. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. ^g 1 Cor. 1. 5. & 12. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 14, 16. 1 Pet. 1. 3. or Ver. 17. Col. 1. 9, 10. 2 Tim. 3. 15. Rom. 12. 2. Phil. 1. 9, 10. ^h Rom. 16. 25. Col. 1. 26. Ch. 3. 9, 11. & 2. 17. Mat. 13. 11. Ver. 17. ⁱ Ver. 5, 11. If. 46. 10. Mat. 11. 26, 27. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10 & 2. 19. Tit. 1. 2. Rom. 8. 28—30. & 9. 11—23. Ch. 3. 11.

cannot be understood to intimate here, that every one of the persons who belonged to the Church of the Ephesians, or elsewhere to other Christian societies, in the bonds of external communion, was, by a particular decree of God, personally chosen to eternal life: for he could have no evidence that this was the case with regard to each, without such a revelation as none, we believe, ever pretended to, and as would very ill agree with other passages relating to the apostacy of some, who once made a very forward profession; and with the many exhortations and cautions which every where occur in his writings. We conclude, therefore, that he speaks of whole societies in general, as consisting of *saints* and *believers*, because this was the predominant character. The word rendered *foundation* is spoken of the foundation of a building, and is here applied to the creation of the world. The Jews date their election from Abraham; but, in the divine dispensations, Christ was prior to Abraham; and it is declared in other places of the New Testament, as well as this, that, even before the creation of Adam, the divine mercy had provided a remedy for his fall. *In love* means, particularly here, “to all the saints,” as appears from ver. 15.—comp. also Coloss. i. 4. *Love* is very often insisted on in this Epistle; the reason of which is, perhaps, to intimate, that now, when the *partition wall was broken down*, (see ch. ii. 14. 22.) it was of the highest importance to cultivate mutual affection, without any regard to the Jewish or Gentile character.

Ver. 5. Having predestinated us] It was not by the observances of the law, but by faith alone in Jesus Christ, that God *pre-determined* to take the Gentiles into the state of sonship, or adoption. This was another particular for which St. Paul blesses God, in the name of the Gentiles; the consideration whereof was fit to raise the thoughts of the Ephesians above the Mosaic law, and keep them in a firm adherence to the liberty of the gospel. *According to the good pleasure of his will*, is spoken here in the same sense with what is said Rom. ix. 18, 23, 24. God, under the law, took the nation of Israel to be his people, without any merit in them; and so it is of his mere good pleasure that he even then purposed to enlarge his kingdom under the gospel, by admitting all, of every nation, to come in and submit themselves, not to the law of Moses, but to the rule and dominion of his Son, Jesus Christ; and this, as it is said in the next words, *For the praise of the glory of his grace*.

Ver. 6. Wherein he hath made us accepted] Nothing can be imagined of greater force to raise the minds of the Ephesians above the Jewish ritual, and to keep them steady in the freedom of the gospel, than what St. Paul says here; namely, that God, before the foundation of the world, freely determined within himself to admit the Gentiles into his gospel kingdom, for the manifestation of his free grace to all the world; and this only for the sake of his beloved Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was to mistake or pervert the end of the gospel, and to debase this glorious dispensation, to make it subservient to the Jewish ritual, or to suppose that the law of Moses was to support, or be supported, by the kingdom of the Messiah; which was to be of larger extent, and settled upon another foundation, whereof the Mosaic institution was but a narrow, faint, and typical representation.

Ver. 8. In all wisdom and prudence,] Having, with infinite wisdom, contrived a way to glorify *all his attributes* in the salvation of men,—even *those* who seemed to have the most different claims; dispensing mercy in a way of judgment, and awakening a humble awe and reverence in the soul by the very method which is used for granting pardon and peace. See Col. i. 9, 10, 28. and ii. 2, 3.

Ver. 9. The mystery of his will,] St. Paul's so often terming God's purpose of calling the Gentiles *a mystery*, and so emphatically declaring it to be *concealed from ages*, and particularly revealed *to himself*, (as we find in this Epistle, where it is so called five times, and four times in that to the Colossians) cannot be by chance, or without some particular reason. The question was, “Whether the converted Gentiles should hearken to the *Jews*,—“who would persuade them that it was necessary for them to submit to circumcision and the law,—or to St. Paul, “who had taught them otherwise?” Now there can be nothing of more force to destroy the authority of the *Jews*, in this case, than the shewing that they knew nothing of the matter;—that it was a perfect *mystery* to them, concealed from their knowledge, and made manifest in God's good time, at the coming of the Messiah, and particularly discovered to St. Paul by immediate revelation; to be communicated by him to the Gentiles, who therefore had a reason to continue steadfast to this truth, and not to be led away from the gospel which he had taught them. See ch. iii. 9.

Ver.

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him :

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will :

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye

heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

Gen. 49. 10. Dan. 9. 24. Mal. 3. 1. Gal. 4. 4. Heb. 1. 2. & 9. 10, 26. 1 Pet. 1. 20. Col. 1. 20. & 2. 10. Heb. 12. 22-24. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ver. 22. 1 Cor. 3. 22. & 11. 3. & 15. 24. Phil. 2. 9-11. Ch. 3. 15. & 2. 15. Gr. the heavens. Acts, 20. 32. & 26. 18. Col. 1. 12. & 3. 21. Rom. 8. 17. & 9. 30. Gal. 3. 2, 9, 29. & 4. 7. Tit. 3. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 4. & 3. 9. If. 46. 10. Pf. 33. 11. & 135. 6. & 101. 24. Mt. 10. 19. Acts, 15. 18. Phil. 2. 11. If. 14. 24, 27. Ver. 6, 14. Ch. 2. 7. & 3. 21. Rom. 9. 23. Luke, 2. 14. If. 43. 21. Phil. 1. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 11. John, 15. 16, 8. Mat. 5. 16. Acts, 3. 26. & 13. 46. & 2. 41. Rom. 1. 16. & 11. 16. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Jam. 1. 18. Rom. 10. 17. & 1. 16, 17. Col. 1. 6, 23. 1 Thes. 1. 13. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Rev. 19. 9. John, 1. 17. Gal. 2. 5, 14. & 3. 1. & 4. 16. & 5. 7. Ch. 4. 21. 2 Cor. 6. 7. Mark, 16. 15, 16. Rom. 1. 16, 17. If. 55. 3. Tit. 2. 11. Heb. 2. 3. John, 3. 14-17. Rom. 8. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 6, 22. & 5. 5. Ch. 4. 30. Gal. 4. 6. Luke, 24. 49. John, 14. 26. & 16. 13. Ver. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 22. & 5. 5. Gal. 4. 6. Rom. 8. 15-17, 23. Ch. 4. 30. Rom. 8. 23. Luke, 21. 28. Acts, 20. 28. Rev. 5. 9. with Exod. 19. 5. Deut. 7. 6. & 14. 2. & 28. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Rom. 1. 8, 9. Phil. 1. 3, 4. Col. 1. 3, 4. 1 Thes. 1. 2-5. & 3. 5-8. 2 Thes. 1. 3. Philem. 4, 5.

Ver. 10. He might gather together] The original, Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, rendered gathered together, properly signifies, to recapitulate, recollect, or put together the heads of a discourse, and to unite again under one head. Both angels and men were at first in harmonious subjection to the Son of God, their common creator; but man having broken himself off from this society, the Son of God and Son of Man, by his humiliation and suffering in the humanity, recovers and re-unites all who faithfully adhere to him, and, in his human nature, presides over the kingdom to which, in the world of glory, they and his angels belong. No view can be nobler than that which this interpretation presents. See ch. iii. 10. Col. i. 16-20. Philip. ii. 10.

Ver. 11. We have obtained an inheritance,] Mr. Locke would render ἐκκλησίᾳς ἡμεῶν are become his inheritance; aluding to Deut. xxxii. 9. and interprets it as referring to the admission of the Gentiles into the church, which is God's heritage. But as we, in this and the next verse, seems opposed to you in the 13th, it must probably signify the Jews who first trusted in Christ, or the body of the Christian church, who were incorporated long before the Ephesians were brought into it. The last clause of this verse certainly expresses God's taking such methods to answer his purpose, as he knows will in fact be successful; but it does not prove any thing like an overbearing impuise on men's minds, to determine them in such a manner as to destroy the natural freedom of their volitions, and so to prevent their being justly accountable to God for such actions.

Ver. 13. Ye were sealed] In Rev. vii. 3. mention is made of God's sealing the foreheads of his servants, that they might be known to be his; aluding to the custom of marking the foreheads of slaves, that the public might know that they were the private property of the purchasers. So St. Paul here says, that God sealed with his Spirit those who believed in him, to mark them for his own. See 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Ver. 14. Which is the earnest, &c.] "In which Holy Spirit you have a certain pledge and token of your being by adoption entitled to the future inheritance; to encourage and animate you under all the difficulties of your way, till the complete redemption of his faithful saints, whom he hath so dearly purchased for his possession. To whom he hath promised everlasting happiness; and he will certainly bestow it upon them in the day of his final appearance, which will at length open with a lustre that shall fully repay so long an expectation, and abundantly conduce to the praise of his glory." What we render till the redemption of the purchased possession, Dr. Whitby would render, till the redemption of life (see Rom. viii. 23.); and Beza, nearly to the same sense, till the redemption of vindication; that is, "till the faithful are set entirely at liberty, and receive complete deliverance and salvation." Some read it, until [the time of] the salutary redemption.

Ver. 15.] Having, in the foregoing verses, thanked God for the great favours and mercies which, from the beginning, he had purposed for the Gentiles under the Messiah, in such a description of that design of the Almighty as was fit to raise their thoughts above the law; having taken notice of their standing firm in the faith which he had taught them, and thanked God for it;—the Apostle here goes on to intreat of God that he would enlighten the minds of the Ephesian converts, to see fully the great things which were actually done for them, and the glorious state they were in under the gospel; of which he gives us such a draught from this verse to ch. ii. 10. as in every part of it shews, that, in the kingdom of Christ, they are set far above the Mosaic rites, and enjoy the spiritual and incomprehensible benefits of it, not by the tenour of a few outward ceremonies, but by their faith alone in Jesus Christ, to whom they are united, and of whom they are members; who is exalted to the height of all dignity, dominion, and power, in his glorified humanity, and in his mediatorial office.

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers ;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation * in the knowledge of him :

18 ^b The eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is ⁱ the hope of his calling, and what ^k the riches of

the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is ^l the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working † of his mighty power,

20 ^m Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 ⁿ Far above all principality, and power,

^f See ver. 3. John, 20. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 7. Acts, 7. 2. Pf. 19. 1. ^g Col. 1. 9, 10. 2 Pet. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 18. & 14. 6, 6. ^h Or for the acknowledgment. ⁱ 11. 11. 18. Luke, 24. 45. Acts, 26. 18. Ch. 5. 8. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. & c. 20. 2 Cor. 4. 6. ^j Ch. 4. 4. Gal. 5. 5. Rom. 8. 24, 25. 1 John, 3. 3. Col. 1. 5. ^k Ver. 7. Ch. 2. 7. & 3. 16. Mat. 13. 44. Phil. 4. 19. 1 Pet. 1. 4. ^l Col. 2. 11. Pf. 140. 2, 7. 14. 53. 1. Ch. 3. 7. Phil. 1. 21. 1 Pet. 1. 5. ^m Pf. 16. 10, 11. & 89. 21, 27. & 110. 1. Acts, 1. 24. & 3. 15, 26. Mark, 14. 62. & 16. 19. Heb. 2. 9. & 1. 3. & 10. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 22. ⁿ Ps. 2. 9—11. Col. 2. 10. & 1. 15, 16, 18. & 2. 15. Ch. 4. 10. & 3. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Heb. 1. 4. Ver. 22.

After I heard of your faith] Some have hence argued, that this Epistle, if directed to the Ephesians, must have been written before St. Paul's long abode at Ephesus ; since he would not have spoken of their faith as only known by report, if he had, by two years and a half, been conversant with them, and seen the effects of it. To this it has been answered by some, that the word *ακουω* signifies, not only to hear, but to understand, by whatever means the knowledge be attained. And others have said, that this Epistle was intended, not only for the church of Ephesus, but for other Asian churches in the neighbourhood. But, perhaps, the easiest and most solid answer is, that, as it was now five or six years since St. Paul quitted Ephesus, he might judge it proper thus to express his complacency on bearing that they continued, in the midst of so many circumstances of temptation, to behave in a manner so worthy what he had personally observed among them. See Col. i. 4. Philip. i. 3. 27. 1 Theff. i. 5, 6. iii. 6. Instead of *faith*, some read *faithfulness*.

Ver. 17. The Father of glory,] A Hebrew expression, which cannot well be changed, since it signifies his being glorious in himself,—the fountain whence all glory is derived—and to whom all glory is to be given. In all which senses it may be taken here, where there is nothing that appropriates it in particular to any one of them. *Wisdom* is evidently used in this verse for “a right conception and understanding of the gospel.” *Revelation* is used by St. Paul, not only for immediate inspiration, but, as it is meant here, and in most other places, for such truths as could not have been found out by human reason, but had their first discovery from revelation ; though men afterwards came to the knowledge of those truths by reading them in the sacred scripture, where they are set down for their information.

Ver. 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened ;] And would give you to have the eyes of your understanding enlightened : Doddridge, more agreeable to the original.

Ver. 19. To us-ward] *Us* here, *you*, ch. ii. 1. and *us* ch. ii. 5. plainly signify the same ; namely, those who, being spiritually dead, partook of the energy of that great power which raised Christ Jesus ; and all those glorious things which in ver. 18—23, he intimates to them, by praying that they may see them, he here, in this verse, tells

us, are bestowed on the saints as believers, and not as observers of Mosaic rites. The admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong emphasis and force of the expression in the original, can scarcely be paralleled in any author, and are superior to what our language can reach.

Ver. 20. From the dead, and set him, &c.] From the dead : and he set him, &c. Instead of *heavenly places*, both here and ver. 3. the margin of our bible reads *things*, which, perhaps, will be thought better, (as we have there remarked above,) if we compare the 22d verse. *He set him at his right hand*,—that is, transferred on him his power as Mediatorial king ;—*ἐν ἰσραηλ*, that is, in his heavenly kingdom.—“He set him at the head of his heavenly kingdom.” See ver. 22. This kingdom is called in the gospel indifferently the *kingdom of God*, and the *kingdom of heaven*. God had before a kingdom and people in this world ; namely, that kingdom which he erected to himself, of the *Jews*, selected and brought back to himself out of the apostatized mass of revolted and rebellious mankind. With this his people he particularly dwelt ; among them he had his habitation, and ruled as their king in a peculiar kingdom : and therefore we see, that our Saviour calls the *Jews the children of the kingdom*, Math. viii. 12. But that kingdom, though God's, was not yet the *kingdom of heaven* ; that came with Christ. See Matth. iii. 2. and x. 7. The former was but *ἐπιγῆ*, of the earth, compared to this *ἐπουρανῆ*, heavenly kingdom, which was to be erected under the Lord Jesus Christ. In short, the whole drift of this and the two following chapters is, to declare the union of Jews and Gentiles into one body, under Christ, the head of the heavenly kingdom.

Ver. 21. All principality, &c.] These abstract names are frequently used in the New Testament, according to the stile of the eastern languages, for “those vested with power and dominion, &c. and that not only here on earth among men, but in heaven, among superior beings ;” and so are often taken to express ranks and degrees of *angels*. Though they are generally agreed to do so here, yet there is no reason to exclude *earthly* potentates out of this text, when *πῶς*, all, necessarily includes them ; for, that men in authority are one sort of *principalities* and *powers*, in a scripture sense, our Saviour's own words shew, Luke, xii. 11. Besides, the Apostle's chief

and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And^p hath put all *things* under his feet,

and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

* Heb. 2. 5, 8. 2 Pet. 3. 7. † Pf. 8. 6—8. Mat. 23. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Phil. 2. 11. Heb. 2. 8. † Ch. 3. 15. & 4. 15, 16. & c. 23. Col. 1. 18. John, 17. 2. Phil. 3. 21. † Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 6, 12, 27. Ch. 2. 16. & 3. 15. & 4. 12, 16. & 5. 23, 30. Col. 1. 18, 24. † John. 1. 14, 16. Ch. 4. 10. Pf. 68. 18. 1 Cor. 12. 6. & 15. 28. Ch. 5. 18. & 3. 19. Phil. 1. 11. Col. 1. 19. & 2. 10. & 3. 11.

chief aim here being to satisfy the Ephesians that they were not to be subjected to the law of Moses, and the government of those who ruled by it, but were called to be of the kingdom of the Messiah; it is not to be supposed that here, where he speaks of Christ's exaltation to a power and dominion paramount to all other, he should not have an eye to that earthly and inferior government of the Jews, to which it was beneath the subjects of so glorious a kingdom as that of Christ to submit themselves: and this is further enforced by the next verse.

Ver. 23. *Fulness*] *Fulness* is here taken in a passive sense, for "a thing to be filled or completed;" as appears by the following words,—*of him that filleth all in all.* That is, "It is Christ the head, who perfecteth the church, by supplying and furnishing all things to all the faithful members, to make them what they are and ought to be in that body." See ch. v. 18. Col. ii. 10. iii. 10, 11. Bishop Sherlocke observes, upon this passage from ver. 17. "What can be added to this description of power and authority?" And yet the Apostle, you observe, founds all this upon Christ's resurrection, and his exaltation consequent to it. Then were all things put under his feet; then was he given to be head over the church, and set above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. The scripture abounds in evidence of this kind; and I think there is nothing plainer in the gospel than that Christ Jesus is *our Lord*, because he hath redeemed us; that he is our *King*, being raised, by the Father, to all power and authority; and that he is our *Mediator and Intercessor*, being set down on the right-hand of God in the heavenly places. But all this has reference only to his mediatorial reign, and not to his eternal Godhead, whereby he is "over all, GOD, blessed for ever. Amen." The Gnostics generally, if not universally, used the word *πληρωμα*, *fulness*, in their writings, to signify all the holy and happy spirits in the universe, as constituting, in this passive sense, the fulness of the Deity. And as these heretics abounded in Asia Minor, and their writings were voluminous and much read, they were enabled to fix that passive meaning to the word *πληρωμα*, when used in a religious sense. St. Paul therefore uses the word here according to the common acceptation in which it was taken among the people to whom he was writing; at the same time securing the fundamental doctrine of the supreme Godhead of Christ, by declaring that *he filleth all in all.*

Inferences.—Are we not, by divine grace and mercy, partakers of those privileges which St. Paul here celebrates with so much delight, and in the review of which, familiar as they were to his thoughts and discourses, he breaks forth, as it were, into a rapturous anthem, in the very beginning of

this Epistle, as he likewise does in so many others? Ought not our hearts to be as warm in such devout acknowledgments? Are *spiritual blessings in heavenly things*, or *places, in Christ Jesus*, less valuable now than they were seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago? Are not the necessities of our souls the same? Let us then join with the most grateful sentiments in the acclamation, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Let his faithful saints give him all the glory, that they are predestinated, with proper regard to the nature of his intelligent and free creatures, and made accepted in the Beloved, that they may be to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Let these united displays of his wisdom and love affect our hearts; for he has, indeed, abounded towards us *in all wisdom and prudence.* And let that *holiness*, which mingles its glories in the whole scheme, be also remembered. Let it never be forgotten, that we are predestinated to be *holy and without blame before him in love*, that we might attain to that blameless temper which *love* alone can inspire and support: and that *without this holiness*, whatever be the gracious intentions, or predestinations of God concerning us, *we shall never see the Lord*, if the holy God be true, or consistent with himself.

For this purpose—that we may be *holy*—the mystery of his will is made known to us, and that grand, impartial, and illustrious plan is displayed, which is so well worthy of all the perfections of God, even his design to *gather together in one all things in Christ*, to unite all good and happy spirits under him *as the common Head*, and to make him the bond of their eternal union to God and to each other. What are *we* sinful creatures, that we, if faithful to the grace of God, may be received into such an *association*? Let us never forget this truth *upon earth*, but always feel its vital influence, and we shall for ever commemorate it *in heaven*—that it is *through his blood we have redemption.* Then, *his Spirit* will be given us as the *seal of the promises*, and the *earnest of our inheritance*; and, by more abundant communications of his sanctifying influences, our souls will be raised to a blessed anticipation of those enjoyments which will endure for ever, and will be for ever new and delightful!

Let me also observe, that faith in Christ, and love to all the saints, is in this chapter put by the Apostle for the whole of a Christian temper. May they be more apparent and operative in all who call themselves by the Christian name—even a firm and active *faith*, a warm and unbounded *love*, which will *forget every thing* that would alienate our hearts from our brethren; and *only remember*, that they are *saints*, consecrated to God, and sanctified by him; that they are *believers in Christ Jesus*, and therefore *one*

C H A P. II.

By comparing what we were by nature with what we are by grace, the Apostle declareth that we are made for good works; and, being brought near by Christ, should not live as Gentiles and foreigners in time past, but as citizens with the saints, and the family of God.

[Anno Domini 62.]

AND ^a you hath be quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

^a Ver. 5. 6. Col. 2. 13. Rom. 8. 2, 7, 8. 2 Cor. 5. 14. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Rev. 3. 7, 16, 17. ^b 1 Cor. 6. 11. Ch. 4. 22. Col. 3. 7. & 1. 21. Tit. 2. 3. 1 Pet. 4. 3. 2 Tim. 2. 26. ^c John, 8. 44. & 12. 31. & 13. 30. & 16. 11. Rev. 12. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 4. ^d Ch. 5. 6. Col. 3. 6. 1 John, 5. 19. ^e Tit. 3. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 3. Gal. 2. 15. Ch. 4. 17—19. Pl. 51. 5. Rom. 5. 12—14. & 8. 7, 8. & 3. 9—20. & 1. 28—32. Mark, 7. 21, 22. * Gr. the will's.

with him, who is our Head, and our All; whose love has given to us, and to them, whatever is lovely in either; who will glorify all his faithful saints, and make them so happy together, that the very thought of that happiness should cause our hearts to overflow with every benevolent affection, as well as with perpetual gratitude to our Divine Deliverer, who is the source of it.

Let us also learn, by the excellent and pathetic prayer of the Apostle, what are the most important petitions that we can offer for ourselves and our Christian friends. Surely this must be numbered among them, that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened more and more, that so we may more clearly and affectionately know what is the great and glorious hope which our Christian calling sets before us. Alas! as yet we know but little of it—but little of that great and glorious inheritance, which God will divide among his faithful saints, and in the enjoyment of which he will for ever unite them all. But adored be his grace if we so know it as deliberately to make choice of it, as to give up every interest and hope inconsistent with it, and determinately to say, *This is our rest, we have desired it.* (Pl. cxxxii. 14.)

He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God. (2 Cor. v. 5.) It is, indeed, an exertion of a divine power; the same that quickened the dead body of our Redeemer, and exalted him to his mediatorial throne. Let our souls, like that of the Apostle, presently take the hint, and soar upwards, as with an eagle's, or rather an angel's wing—soar to those glorious abodes, where he sits at the right-hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. There he reigns, not only as the sovereign Guardian of the universe, but in the more endearing character of the Head of the Church, bearing the same tender affection to it, exerting the same care over it, as the head over the members; calling the church, narrow as its boundaries seem, his fulness, though he filleth all in all.

“Blessed Lord! Fill our souls more and more with all the graces of thy Spirit, and extend the boundaries of the church all abroad! Unite us in these dearest bonds; and give us always to act worthy of that honour which thou conferrest upon us, when thou callest us thy body, thy flesh, and thy bones.” Eph. v. 30.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. This Epistle opens with the Apof-

2^b Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the ^c prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the ^d children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also ^e we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling *the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even

tle's usual address: Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, appointed to this high office and honour by the will of God immediately revealed from heaven, to the saints which are at Ephesus, by profession and practice separated from this present evil world, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, who by faith are united to him, and approve their fidelity before him: Grace be to you, and peace, in all their comprehensive import, from God our Father, the fountain of blessedness; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the purchaser and bestower of every good and perfect gift. Note, (1.) All true Christians are saints upon earth. (2.) They who have obtained grace to be faithful, have need still to look to the same fountain whence they derive continual supplies, that their stability may be secured, and their peace be enlarged.

2dly, Deeply impressed with a sense of the inestimable blessings, of which, in Christ Jesus, they had been made partakers, the grateful Apostle breaks forth in praises and thanksgivings to the God of all grace.

1. In general: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the adored Redeemer, in whom he is now become our reconciled and covenant God, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, or places, in Christ, blessings descending from above, and leading up our souls to high and heavenly things, till, if faithful to the grace of God, we reach the mansions of eternal blessedness. And for all these rich gifts which we now enjoy, and all the greater glory which we hope for, be everlasting praise, honour, and thanksgiving, ascribed to the ever-blessed Fountain of mercies. Note, (1.) We cannot bless God as he bleisseth us: his blessings are real gifts conferred; ours are only the grateful acknowledgments that we owe for them. (2.) All the spiritual blessings which we enjoy are freely given to us in Christ Jesus.

2. In particular:

(1.) He blesses God for the reconciliation and acceptance obtained through Christ Jesus: Wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in his boundless grace he has taken us for his own, and, regarding us as we stand united with his dear Son, embraces us with the arms of his love, accepting both our persons and services for his sake.

(2.) He praises God for the great and inestimable blessings of redemption and remission of sins, through the adored Saviour: in whom we have redemption, a deliverance from evil, and a restoration to the capability of enjoying all blessedness,

as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his

great love wherewith he loved us,

5² Even when we were dead in sins, ^a hath

¹ Ver. 7. Ch. 1. 7. & 3. 8, 16. Rom. 10. 12. Luke, 1. 78. 2 Cor. 1. 7. James, 5. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 7. Pf. 57. 1. & 69. 17. & 86. 15. & cxxxv. Mic. 7. 18, 19. Exod. 34. 6, 7. ² Rom. 5. 6, 8, 10, 20, 21. & 6. 4, 5, 8. & 8. 11. Col. 2. 12, 13. & 3. 1, 3. 1 Cor. 1. 30. ^a Acts, 15. 11. Rom. 3. 24. & 5. 20, 21. & 6. 23. Tit. 3. 5, 7. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Gal. 1. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 2—4. 13.

fedness, in virtue of the inestimable price which he has paid, *through his most precious blood*, shed on purpose to satisfy divine justice, and obtain our deliverance from the curse of a broken law; in virtue whereof we have *the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*; though it was due to our substitute, the pardon is absolutely free to us: and that such a Redeemer should be ever provided, was itself a matter of the most transcendent grace and favour; *wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence*, manifesting the most astonishing depths of wisdom in the contrivance, and prudence in the execution of this wondrous scheme of salvation.

(3.) He blesses God for the knowledge which he had communicated to them of his will. *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will*; which was hid from former ages, or but darkly made known, but now is revealed to us, both by an external revelation of it clearly in his word, and by the internal illumination of his Spirit, *according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself*—a purpose of infinite love and advantage to all who will submit to be saved by grace—that in the dispensation of the fulness of times under the gospel, the last dispensation of grace which will be vouchsafed to the sinful sons of men, *he might gather together in one all things in Christ*, reducing things again to order from the confusion which sin had introduced, recovering all his faithful saints, whether Jews or Gentiles, from the miseries of their fallen state, and, under Christ as their living head, uniting them in one body; *both which are in heaven and which are on earth*, angels as well as saints being formed into one glorious company, *even in him*, who is their centre of union, and whom they acknowledge as their common Lord.

(4.) He blesses God for the glorious inheritance obtained in Christ for the faithful. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance*, holding a title to eternal life by faith in him; *being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we, to whom the word was first preached, should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ*, and embraced his gospel. (See the Annotations and also the Introduction to this chapter.) *In whom ye Gentiles also trusted*, and obtained, through faith in him, a title to a like inheritance with us, *after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*, and became thereby obedient to the faith, and partakers in common of all our blessings.

(5.) He blessed God for the seal and assurance which they had received of their interest in the promises. *In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*, which, shining on his own work, conveyed the fullest evidence to your consciences of your particular interest in the salvation of the gospel, *which is the earnest of our inheritance*, a pledge and foretaste of the glory which shall be revealed in all the faithful saints of God—*until the redemption of the purchased possession*, when the righte-

ous shall be brought to the perfection of happiness above, and the work be completed in the resurrection of a glorified body at the last day, *unto the praise of his glory*, when to eternity his great name shall be exalted by all his saints, who shall surround his throne with never-ending praises.

3dly, The Apostle accompanies his grateful thanksgivings with his affectionate prayers. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints*, shewn by the most genuine proofs, *cease not to give thanks for you at every approach to the throne of grace, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our covenant God in him, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*, making a more clear and experimental discovery to you of the glorious truths of his word, and manifesting with greater energy his love to your souls; that you may know, choose, and delight in him as your God; *the eyes of your understanding, which by nature were darkened, being now enlightened, that ye may know, (1.) What is the hope of his calling*, beholding with the spiritual eye of faith, and, in a blessed measure, now enjoying the unutterably glorious privileges which it comprehends: *And, (2.) What the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*, at present in all the inestimably precious gifts and graces which he bestows, and hereafter in the complete and everlasting blessedness which he hath provided for all persevering believers: (3.) *And what is the exceeding greatness of his mighty power to us-ward who believe*, how surpassing marvellous, that we, who were dead in sins, should ever be quickened to the life of faith and grace, preserved amidst all the enemies, spiritual and temporal, without and within, which fight against us, and, if faithful unto death, our bodies at last raised from the dust in glory, *according to the working of his mighty power*, an act of omnipotence no less than that *which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*, leading captivity captive, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, triumphant over all his foes, and exalted to the throne of Majesty on high, *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*; whether angels of light, or demons of darkness, or earthly potentates and princes, by whatever name or title distinguished, all are made subject unto him; *and hath put all things under his feet*, as the exalted Mediator, *and gave him to be the head over all things to the church*; to govern, protect, and preserve his faithful people from all foes; while he, as their living head of vital influence, actuates, quickens, and strengthens every member of his church, *which is his body mystical*, and in that sense they are *the fulness of him*; though in himself Christ is infinitely perfect, and needeth us not; while we receive our all out of him *that filleth all in all*, supplying every want of his faithful saints, and bestowing on them the abundance of his grace, that they may grow up unto him in all things,

quicken'd us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved);

6 And ¹ hath rais'd us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 20. Rom. 6. 4. 5. Col. 1. 18. Mat. 8. 11. & 26. 29. Luke, 22. 29, 30. Rev. 3. 21. John, 12. 26. & 14. 3. & 17. 26, 21—24.

things, and be conformed to him their head. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is the constant duty which we owe to each other. (2.) The prospect of the glorious inheritance before us should quicken our desires after it. (3.) Christ hath all power committed to him for the good of his saints; and they may be confident of his care and support in every time of need.

C H A P. II.

THE Apostle begins this chapter with observing, that even the Ephesians, though lying, by nature, under the sentence of death, on account of their trespasses and sins, Christ had filled with his gifts and graces, ver. 1. then describes the character and behaviour of the Ephesians in their heathen state, to make them sensible, that, notwithstanding the advantages which they pretended to have derived from the heathen mysteries, all the Gentiles, not excepting the initiated themselves, were deeply sunk in the grossest ignorance and wickedness, ver. 2.—Then, speaking in the name of the converted Jews, he acknowledged, that they likewise, before their conversion, had spent their life after the manner of the Gentiles, in fulfilling the lusts of their flesh, and their corrupt imaginations; so that they were naturally children of wrath, even as the Gentiles, ver. 3.—Consequently, they had not the least reason to expect any favour from God. Nevertheless, from the great love which he bare to the Jewish nation, God had made them, as well as the Gentiles, alive together by Christ, ver. 4, 5.—and had set them down together in the heavenly places of the Christian church, wherein salvation is promised as a free gift to all, through faith, and had sealed that promise to them by the gifts of the Spirit, ver. 6.—That future generations, knowing the exceeding greatness of God's grace, may be encouraged to expect pardon upon their repentance, ver. 7.—Then he told the Ephesians, that the admission, not of the Gentiles only, but even of the Jews, into the Christian church, and their having the promise of salvation, through faith, sealed to them, were owing entirely to the unmerited benevolence of God, and not to their own good works, so that no one could boast of having merited salvation, ver. 8, 9.—At the same time he told them expressly, that these great favours were bestowed on them to fit them for good works, ver. 10.

The Apostle having thus described the character and state of both Jews and Gentiles before their conversion, he desired the Gentiles to remember, that, in their heathen state, none of them, not even the initiated in the mysteries, had any knowledge of Christ the Saviour, or hope of the pardon of sin, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants, and without hope of pardon, nay, without the knowledge of the true God, ver. 11, 12.—But now, by the pure favour of God, being seated in Christ's church, they enjoyed equal knowledge and hopes and privileges with the Jews, God's ancient people; for, though not circumcised, God had brought them nigh to himself, and to the Jews, by the

blood of Christ, ver. 13. — who is the author of peace both to Jews and Gentiles, and hath made of both one church or fellowship, in which the true God is to be worshipped; having thrown down the Jewish peculiarity, which was the partition-wall that had hitherto separated the Jews from the Gentiles, ver. 14.—and, by his death in the flesh, hath taken away the cause of the enmity which subsisted between them, even the Levitical ordinances; that he might create the two into one new man, body, or well agreeing society under himself, as head or governor, thus making peace between them, ver. 15.—also that he might reconcile both in one body, or visible church to God, having, through his cross, slain the cause of their enmity to God, even the wicked affections and passions of both, ver. 16.—and this peace with God, Christ preached by his Apostles to the Gentiles, and to the Jews, ver. 17.—And therefore, through him, both have access in the Christian church, to worship the Father of the universe with hope of acceptance and pardon; a privilege much greater than any which the initiated in the heathen mysteries could claim, ver. 18.—Withal, that such of the asarchs, or priests of Diana, as were now become members of the *fellowship of the mystery of God's will* by faith, and all in the province of Asia, who formerly were employed about the temple of that idol, might have no cause to regret their having forsaken her worship, the Apostle assured them that they were no longer strangers to the covenants, and foreigners, as they had been, in the commonwealth of the true God; (see ver. 12.) but by the knowledge and belief of the mystery of God's will, they were become joint citizens in that commonwealth with the saints, and *οικουμην*, *belonging to the house*, or visible church of God, as constituent parts of that great fabric, which is constructed for the use, not of the inhabitants of Asia alone, but of believers of all nations, the true *saints* of God, ver. 19.—For they were built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, ver. 20.—by which the whole building, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, being fitly joined together, groweth into an holy temple for the Lord Jesus, to officiate in as a high priest, ver. 21.—And in regard the apostles and prophets, the foundations of the temple of God, who raised the glorious edifice by the power of the Holy Ghost, were, of course, supernaturally fitted for their office, as is mentioned afterwards, (ch. iv. 7—13.) this great temple of the Christian visible church, both in the manner in which it was built, and in the materials of which it is composed, as well as in its dimensions, described chap. iii. 18. 19. infinitely excelled the temples at Ephesus and at Jerusalem. Besides, being reared, not for the purpose of a ritual worship, and far less for celebrating the impure rites of an idol, like those performed in the temple of Diana, but for the holy spiritual worship of the true God, according to the Christian manner, this temple infinitely excelled the temples at Ephesus and at Jerusalem in the use for which it was built. To conclude, the Apostle informed the Ephesians and the Judaizers, that this great temple

Jefus :

7 That in the ages to come ^k he might

shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jefus.

^k 1 Tim. i. 16. Ch. 3. 8. See ver. 4, 5.

temple, the Christian church, in which the believing Jews also were built as constituent parts, is rendered glorious, not like the temple at Ephesus by the presence of a lifeless image of an idol, vainly pretended to have fallen down from Jupiter, nor even like the ancient temple at Jerusalem, by any outward visible symbol of the presence of the true God; but by his real, though invisible presence, fitting every part of the fabrick with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, ver. 22. See chap. i. 23.

By this grand figure the Apostle has taught us, that, under the gospel dispensation, the presence of God is not any longer manifested in a material temple, as under the Mosaic dispensation; neither is his worship limited to particular places and seasons; nor does it consist in ritual services. But any society of believers, met for worshipping God in spirit and in truth, is a real temple of God, because, in that society, prayers and praises are publicly offered to God: nay, every individual believer is a temple, because God is revealed in him, and is always inwardly worshipped and praised by him. And with respect to the Ephesians in particular, since they were constituent parts of the great temple of God, the Christian church, their honour as the keepers of this temple, and as worshippers therein, was infinitely greater than their honour as priests and worshippers of Diana: nay, greater than it would have been had they become priests and worshippers in the temple at Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. *And*] This particle gives us the thread of St. Paul's discourse, which it is impossible to understand without seeing the train of it: without that view it would be like a rope of gold dust; all the parts would be excellent, and of value, but would seem heaped together without order or connection. This *and* here, it is true, ties the parts together, and points out the connection and coherence of St. Paul's discourse; but yet it stands so far from the verb *set*, in ver. 20, of the foregoing chapter, and *quickened*, in ver. 5, of this, which are the two verbs it couples together, that it would scarcely be observed or admitted by one unacquainted with St. Paul's style; and therefore it may not be amiss to lay it in its due light before the reader. In ver. 18—20. of ch. i. the Apostle prays, that the Ephesians may be so enlightened, as to see the great advantages they received by the gospel: those which he specifies are, 1. What great *hopes* it gave them. 2. What an exceeding *glory* accompanied the inheritance of the saints. 3. The mighty *power* exerted by God on their behalf, which bore some proportion to that which he employed in the raising of Christ from the dead, and placing him at his right-hand: upon the mention of which, his mind being full of that glorious image, he lets his pen run into a description of the exaltation of Christ, which lasts to the end of the chapter; and then resumes the thread of his discourse, which runs briefly thus: "I pray God that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may see the exceeding great power of God, which is employed upon us who believe; corresponding [*κατὰ τὸν*] to that en-

gy wherewith he raised Christ from the dead, and seated him at his right-hand; for so likewise has he raised you, who were dead in trespasses and sins: us, I say, who were dead in trespasses and sins, hath he quickened and raised together with Christ, and seated together with him in his heavenly kingdom." This is the train and connection of his discourse from ch. i. 18. to ch. ii. 5. though it be interrupted by many incident thoughts, which, after his usual manner, he enlarges upon by the way, and then returns to the main subject: for here again we must observe, that having, in the verse before us, mentioned their being *dead in trespasses and sins*, he proceeds to enlarge upon that forlorn estate of the *Gentiles* before their conversion; and then comes to what he designed, namely, that God, out of his great goodness, *quickened*, raised, and placed them together with Christ in his heavenly kingdom.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked*] The Ephesians were remarkable, in the midst of all their learning, for a most abandoned character. They banished Hermodorus merely for his *virtue*; thereby in effect making a law, that every modest and temperate man should leave them. The word *αἰών*, rendered *world*, may be observed in the New Testament to signify the lasting state and constitution of things in the great tribes or collections of men, considered in reference to the kingdom of God; whereof there were two most eminent, and principally intended by the word *αἰώνες*, when that is used alone; and that is, *ὁ πρὸν αἰών*, *this present world*, which is taken for that state of the world wherein the children of Israel were God's people, and made up his kingdom upon earth; the *Gentiles*, that is to say, all the other nations of the world, being in a state of apostasy and revolt from him, the professed vassals and subjects of the devil, to whom they paid homage; and *αἰὼν μέλλον*, *the world to come*, — i. e. the time of the gospel, wherein God, by Christ, broke down the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile, and opened a way for reconciling the rest of mankind, and taking the *Gentiles* again into his kingdom, under the Lord *Jefus Christ*, under whose peculiar rule he had put it. The phrase, *prince of the power of the air*, whatever it may mean besides, intimates, that Satan possessed great power; and, consequently, that our Saviour's virtue, which was able to struggle with and conquer him, both in the wilderness and in the garden of Gethsemane, was inconceivably great, and remarkably illustrious. The original, which we render, *now worketh in the children of disobedience*, is very strong and emphatical, both in the denomination it gives to the heathen in general, as children of rebellion and obstinacy, who *would yield to no persuasion* which would urge them to a better course of life (as the etymology of the word *ἀπειθεία* imports) and in the forcible manner in which it expresses the influence of Satan over them—as inspired, or possessed by him. The words might be rendered here, *even that Spirit who now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience*.

Ver. 3. *Among whom also we, &c.*] The Apostle, changing the expression from *ye to we*, seems plainly to declare, that

8. For ¹ by grace are ye saved ^m through gift of God :
 faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

¹ See ver. 5. ^m Rom. 3. 24. & 4. 16. & 5. 1. Gal. 3. 16, 20. Mat. 16. 17. Acts 16. 31. John 3. 14—18. 36. & 6. 40, 41, 45, 65. AG 1. 15. 9. 14. & 6. 14. Rom. 10. 14, 15, 17. Ch. 1. 19. Phil. 1. 29. ⁿ Rom. 3. 20, 27. & 4. 2. & 11. 6. & 9. 11, 16. 1 Cor. 1. 29—31. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Tit. 3. 5.

that he meant to include himself and all other Christians in what he here says. See Rom. iii. 9. Instead of *the desires of the flesh and of the mind*, some render the Greek, *the dictates of the flesh and of the passions*; observing that the word *δαιμόνια*, here made use of, expresses a kind of *dictatorial power*; and the plural, *δαιμόνιων*, which we render *mind*, as it cannot here signify its *intellectual powers*, must denote the various passions, according to the prevalence of which our minds take as it were different colours and forms, and become strangely different from themselves. Some think that the meaning of the phrase, *by nature children*, &c. is only that they were so *truly and indeed*. But though Dr. Taylor has taken great pains to establish this interpretation, it appears incomparably more reasonable, upon the whole, to understand the words *of the original apostacy and corruption*, in consequence of which, men do, according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt. And we may venture to affirm, that the word *φύσει*, *by nature*, signifies a natural disposition, and not merely an acquired habit.

Ver. 4. But God,] This connects the present verse admirably well with that immediately preceding, and makes the parts of that incidental discourse cohere; which ending in this verse, St. Paul, in the beginning of verse 5, takes up the thread of his general discourse again, as if nothing had come between. See on ver. 1.

Ver. 5. Even when we were dead, &c.] “ In this wonderful love, with which he of his own good pleasure has loved us, even when we Jews, as well as Gentiles, one as much as another, were in such forlorn, wretched, and desperate circumstances, as to be dead in sin, and so helpless, hopeless, and loathsome in our fallen state; he even then quickened us;”—that is, by the Spirit given to those who by faith in Christ were united to him, became his members, and sons of God, partaking of the adoption: by which Spirit they were put into a state of life, (see Rom. viii. 9—15.) and made capable, if they would, to live to God, and not to obey sin in the lusts thereof, nor to yield their members instruments of sin unto iniquity; but to give up themselves to God, as men alive from the dead. See Rom. vi. 11—13. and, concerning the last clause of this verse, the *Inferences and Reflections*.

Ver. 6. And hath raised us up, &c.] What the Apostle here says, does not merely signify our being raised to the hope of pardon and glory by the resurrection and ascension of Christ, but seems to refer to that union which there is between him and all true believers; by virtue of which they may look on *his* resurrection, ascension, and glory, as a pledge and security of something of a similar nature, to be accomplished in due time in and upon *them*, if faithful unto death. Thus we are taught to consider Christ as a public person, the elder brother of the family, and the

guardian of the younger branches of it, who look up to him for succour.

Ver. 8. By grace are ye saved through faith;] He that reads St. Paul with attention, cannot but observe, that, speaking of the Gentiles, he calls their being brought back again from their apostacy into the kingdom of God, their being *saved*. Before they were thus brought to be the people of God again under the Messiah, they were, as they are here described, aliens,—enemies,—without hope,—without God,—*dead in trespasses and sins*; and therefore, when by faith in Christ they came to be reconciled, and to be in covenant again with God, and his subjects, and liege people, they were in the way of salvation; and, if they persevered, could not miss of attaining it, though they were not yet in actual possession. The Apostle, whose aim it is in this Epistle to give them a high sense of God's extraordinary grace and favour to them, and to raise their thoughts above the mean observances of the law, shews them that there was nothing *in them*, in their miserable state of nature, no *deeds* or *works* of theirs, nothing that they could do, to prepare and recommend themselves, which contributed aught to God's calling them into his kingdom under the gospel; that it was all purely the work of *grace*, for they were all by nature *dead in trespasses and sins*, and, without the Spirit of God, could not make one step, or the least motion towards it. *Faith*, which alone gained them admittance, and alone opened the kingdom of heaven to believers, was the *gift of God*. Men, by their natural faculties, could not attain to it: it is *faith* which is the source and beginning of this new life.—By a revelation of that, which they could never discover by their own natural faculties, God bestows on them the knowledge of the Messiah, and the *faith* of the gospel; which, as soon as they have received, they are in the kingdom of God, in a new state of life; and, being thus quickened by the Spirit, may, as men *alive*, work, if they will. Hence St. Paul says, Rom. x. 17. that *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*; having in the foregoing verses declared, that there is no *believing* without *hearing*, and no *hearing* without a *preacher*, and no *preacher* unless he be *sent*; that is, the good tidings of salvation by the Messiah, and the doctrine of *faith*, was not, could not be known to any, but those to whom God communicated it by the preaching of his prophets and apostles, to whom he revealed it, and whom he sent on his errand with this discovery. And thus God now *gave faith* to the Ephesians and the other Gentiles, to whom he *sent* St. Paul and others his fellow-labourers, to bestow on them the knowledge of salvation, reconciliation, and restoration to the kingdom of the Messiah: to all which, though revealed by the Spirit of God in the writings of the Old Testament, yet the Gentile world were kept wholly strangers by the ceremonial law of *Moses*, which was the *wall of partition* that kept the Gentiles at a distance and aliens: this wall

God

10 For we are * his workmanship, created hath before * ordained that we should walk in in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God them.

* Deut. 30. 6. Pf. 100. 3. If. 29. 23. & 43. 1, 21. & 44. 21. John 3. 3, 5. 1 Cor. 3. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. Ch. 1. 4. & 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. Fr. 1. 14. James, 1. 18. * Or, prepared.

God, according to his gracious purpose before the erecting it, having now broken down, communicated to them the doctrine of faith, and admitted them, upon their acceptance of it, to all the advantages and privileges of this kingdom: all which was done of his free grace, without any merit or procurement of theirs;—He was found of them who sought him not, and was made manifest to them that asked not after him. He that would clearly understand this second chapter of the Ephesians, should read carefully with it Rom. x. and 1 Cor. ii. 9—16. where he will see, that faith is owing to the revelation of the Spirit of God, and the communication of that revelation by men sent by God, who attained this knowledge, not by the assistance of their own natural parts, but from the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Thus faith, we see, is the gift of God; and, with it, comes the Spirit of God, which brings life to the soul. God himself, by the gift of faith, creates them, that is, every genuine penitent, unto good works; but when by him they are made living creatures, in this new creation, it is then expected that, being quickened, they should act; and from henceforward works are required, not as the meritorious cause of salvation, but as a necessary indispensable qualification of the subjects of God's kingdom under his Son Jesus Christ; it being impossible that any one should at the same time be a rebel and a good subject too. And though none can be subjects of the kingdom of God, but those who, continuing in the faith which has once been bestowed on them, sincerely endeavour to conform themselves to the laws of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and though God gives eternal life to all those, and to those only, who do so; yet eternal life is the gift of God, the gift of free grace, as purchased solely by the blood of the covenant for every faithful saint.

Now, that when God hath, by calling them into the kingdom of his son, and bestowing on them the gift of faith, thus quickened the penitent, and they are by his free grace created in Christ Jesus unto good works,—that then works are required of them, is hence evident—that they are called upon and pressed (1 Theff. ii. 12.) to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory; and to the same purpose, ch. iv. 1. Philip. iii. 17. Col. i. 10—12. So that of those who are in the kingdom of God, who are actually under the covenant of grace, good works are strictly required, under penalty of the loss of eternal life. See Rom. vi. 11—13. viii. 13. Indeed; this is the tenor of the whole New Testament; the apostate heathen world were dead, and were of themselves in that state not capable of doing any thing to procure their translation into the kingdom of God; that was purely the work of grace: but, when they received the gospel in sincerity, they were then made alive by faith, and by the Spirit of God; then they were in a state of life, and working and works were expected of them. Thus grace and works are consistent without any difficulty; and that which hath caused the perplexity, and seeming contradic-

tion, has been men's mistake concerning the kingdom of God. God, in the fulness of time, set up his kingdom in this world under his Son, into which he admitted all those who believed on him, and sincerely received Jesus the Messiah for their Lord. Thus by faith in Jesus Christ men became the people of God, and subjects of his kingdom, and were henceforth, during their continuance in the living faith and profession of the gospel, accounted saints,—the beloved of God,—the faithful in Christ Jesus,—the people of God,—saved, &c.—for in these terms and the like the Sacred Scripture speaks of them. And indeed, those who were thus translated into the kingdom of the Son of God, were no longer in the dead state of the Gentiles; but, having passed from death to life, were in the state of the living, in the way to eternal life, which they were sure to attain, if they persevered in that life which the gospel required, viz. faith and sincere obedience. But yet this was not an actual possession of eternal life in the kingdom of God in the world to come; for, by apostacy or disobedience, this, though sometimes called salvation, might be forfeited and lost; whereas he that is once possessed of the other, has actually an eternal inheritance in the heavens, which fadeth not away. These two considerations of the kingdom of heaven some men have confounded, and made one; so that a man being brought into the first of these wholly by grace without works (faith being all that was required to instate a man in it) they have concluded, that, for the attaining eternal life, or the kingdom of God in the world to come, faith alone, without good works, is required,—contrary to the express words of Scripture, and the whole tenor of the gospel. It is, however, by grace that we are made partakers of both these kingdoms; it is only into the kingdom of God in this world that we are admitted by faith alone without works; but for our admittance into the other, both faith and obedience are requisite,—internal holiness, and a sincere endeavour to perform all those duties,—all those good works which are incumbent upon us, and come in our way to be performed, from the time of our believing until the hour of death. See the Inferences and Reflections.

Ver. 9. Left any man] That no one.

Ver. 10. We are his workmanship,] “ In this new state in the kingdom of God, we are, and ought to look upon ourselves, not as deriving any thing from ourselves, but as the mere workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, to the end that we should do good works, for which he hath prepared and fitted us to walk in them. It is not by any works of the law, nor in consideration of our submitting to the Mosaical institution, or having any alliance with the Jewish nation, that we Gentiles are brought into the kingdom of Christ: we are in this entirely the workmanship of God; we are as it were created therein, framed and fitted by him to the performance of those good works in which we were thenceforth to live; and so owe nothing of this our new being, in this new state, to any preparation or fitting that we received

11 Wherefore ^p remember, that ye *being* in time passed Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ^q Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ^r ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of pro-

mise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 ^s But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is ^t our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the ^u middle wall of partition *between us*;

^p Ch. 5. 8. 1 Cor. 6. 11. & 12. 2. Col. 1. 21. & 3. 7. Tit. 3. 3. ^q Rom. 2. 27—29. & 3. 27. 30. Col. 2. 11, 13. Tit. 1. 10. ^r John, 15, 5. & 10. 16. Ezek. 13. 9. Gal. 4. 8. Ch. 4. 18. Col. 1. 21. 1 Thes. 4. 5. with John, 14. 6. Acts, 4. 12. & 7. 25. & 26. 18. Rom. 9. 4, 5, 8. Ch. 1. 18. 1 Thes. 4. 13. ^s Gen. 49. 10. If. 11. 10. & 43. 6. & 49. 12. & 55. 7. Acts, 2. 39. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Rev. 5. 9. 1 Pet. 3. 13. Col. 1. 21. Ver. 14—22. ^t If. 9. 6, 7. Mic. 5. 5. Acts, 10. 36. Rom. 5. 1, 10. Col. 1. 20. John, 10. 16. & 16. 33. Ezek. 37. 22, 26. Rom. 3. 29, 30. & 9. 24. & 10. 12. Gal. 3. 28. ^u Eph. 3. 8. Acts, 10. 28.

“from the Jewish church, or any relation that we stood in “thereunto.” The latter part of the verse before us is conformable to what he says, ver. 5, 6. that those who were dead in trespasses and sins, God quickened with Christ; they being by faith united to him, and partaking of the same Spirit of life, which raised him from the dead; whereby, as men brought to life, they were enabled, if they would not resist or quench that Spirit, to live unto God in righteousness and holiness, as before they were under the absolute dominion of Satan and their lusts.

Ver. 11.] From the foregoing doctrine, that God, of his free grace, according to his purpose from the beginning, had quickened and raised the convert Gentiles together with Christ, and seated them with him in his heavenly kingdom, that is, his gospel kingdom, St. Paul draws this inference to keep them from Judaizing, That though they, as was the state of the heathen world, were heretofore, by being uncircumcised, shut out from the kingdom of God, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in the world, yet they were by Christ,—who had taken away the ceremonial law, that wall of partition, which kept them in that state of distance and opposition,—now admitted to be the people of God, without being subjected to the law of Moses; and were with the Jews now created into *one new man*, or body of men; so that they were no longer to look on themselves as aliens, or as more remote from the kingdom of God than the Jews themselves: ver. 11—22. The terms *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* in the abstract, are put for persons circumcised or uncircumcised, as in Rom. ii. 26. iii. 30. and iv. 9.

Ver. 12. That—ye were without Christ, &c.] “Without any knowledge of the Messiah, or any expectation of deliverance or salvation by him.” Though the covenant, for substance, was one and the same, the Apostle speaks of it in the plural number, *covenants*, as it was delivered at several times, with various explications and enlargements, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and afterwards to the whole body of the Israelites: and as the promises which it contained centered in the great promise of the Messiah, and of salvation by him, St. Paul therefore speaks of them in the singular number, as but one promise; which is agreeable to the Scripture style in other places. Some propose to render this passage, *Strangers from the covenants*,—*having no hope of the promise*. The Gentiles were with-

out God in the world, as they neither knew nor served the true God. It is in this sense that they are here called “*Atheoi*, without God, for there were few of them *Atheists* in our sense of the word; that is to say, deniers of a superior power; and many of them acknowledged one supreme eternal God: but as St. Paul says, Rom. i. 21. *Even when they knew God, they glorified him not as God*: they owned not him alone; but turned from the invisible God to the worship of images and the false gods of their countries. It has been observed upon the clause of this verse, *having no hope*, that though a general knowledge and uncertain idea of a future state prevailed among the heathens, yet it is certain that they reasoned very weakly upon the subject; that they had no well-grounded hope of future happiness, and that they were but very little impressed with it: so that they had no deity to which they prayed for eternal life, as the fathers often remonstrate; and by far the greater part of their most learned philosophers either expressly denied, in private lectures to their pupils, the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, or taught principles quite inconsistent with it.

Ver. 13. *Are made nigh by the blood of Christ*.] There seems to be an evident allusion here to the privilege of those Israelites who were not under any ceremonial pollution, or who were cleansed from their guilt by the blood of atonement; and so had free liberty of entering the temple, and conversing with God: upon which account they are called “*A people near unto him*;” Pf. cxlviii. 14. comp. Exod. xix. 4—6. Lev. x. 3. Pf. lxxv. 4. and see Col. ii. 13, 14.

Ver. 14. *He is our peace*.] Mr. Locke would have this to be the same with *your peace*, and to be meant of the Gentile converts of whom the Apostle had been speaking just before; but it is evident that the reconciliation as well as the enmity was mutual; and the Jews were at least as strongly prejudiced against the Gentiles as the Gentiles against the Jews. The Apostle therefore, with consummate propriety, makes use of terms which were intended to include all true believers, whether originally belonging to the one or the other. The *middle wall of partition*, or separation, is mentioned in reference to that wall in the temple which was called the *Chel*, and separated the court of the Gentiles from that into which the Jews only were allowed to enter, and of which we have the most authentic account in Josephus. See Acts xxi. 28.

Ver.

15 * Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain † one new man, so making peace ;

16 And that he might † reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity * thereby :

17 And came and † preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them † that were

nigh.

18 For † through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but † fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ;

20 And are † built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ;

* Col. 2. 14. & 1. 20, 22. Rom. 6. 6. & 8. 3, 4. Gal. 4. 4, 5. & 3. 13. Rom. 10. 4. Heb. vii—x. † Ver. 16—21. Ch. 1. 6. & 4. 13. Gal. 6. 15. Rom. 7. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Ch. 4. 23, 24. Col. 3. 10. † Col. 1. 20, 21 & 2. 14. Rom. 8. 3. & 6. 6. † Or in himself. † If. 57. 19. Zech. 9. 10. Acts, 10. 36. & 2. 39. Ver. 12. Pl. 73. 27. † Pl. 148. 14. & 135. 4. & 76. 1, 2. & 147. 2, 19, 20. † John, 10. 7, 9. & 11, 6. Rom. 5. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Ch. 1. 13. & 3. 12. & 4. 4. Heb. 4. 16. & 10. 19, 20. & 7. 19. Ver. 12. Ch. 4. 18, 19. † Ch. 3. 6. Gal. 3. 26, 28. & 4. 26, 31. Heb. 3. 1, 6. & 12. 22. Gal. 6. 10. Phil. 3. 3, 20. † Mat. 16. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 4—6. Rev. 21. 14. 1 Cor. 3. 9—11. & 11. 28. Ch. 3. 5. & 4. 11—13. Pl. 118. 22. If. 23. 16.

Ver. 15. Having abolished—the enmity,] It was the ritual law of the Jews which kept them and the Gentiles at an irreconcilable distance, so that they could come to no terms of a fair correspondence: the force whereof was so great, that even after Christ was come, and had put an end to the obligation of that law, yet it was almost impossible to bring them together; and this was that which in the beginning most obstructed the progress of the gospel, and disturbed the Gentile converts. The Apostle says, that Christ abolished that part of the law which consisted in positive commands and ordinances, that so he might make or frame the two, namely, Jews and Gentiles, into one new society or body of God's people, in a new constitution under himself, —so making peace between them. This appearing to be the Apostle's meaning, it may not be amiss to look into the reason why he expresses it in this more figurative manner, To make in himself, of twain, one new man; which being more suitable to the ideas that he had, was in fewer words more lively and express to his purpose. He always has the Lord Jesus Christ in his mind, as the Head of the church, which was his body; from and by whom alone, by being united to him, the whole body, and every member of it, received life, vigour, and strength, and all the benefits of that state: which admirably well shews that whoever were united to the head, must needs be united to each other; and also that all the privileges and advantages they enjoyed were wholly owing to their union with and adherence to him, their head; which were the two things that he was here inculcating on the convert Gentiles of Ephesus, to shew them that now, under the gospel, men became the people of God, merely by living faith in Jesus Christ, and having him for their head, and not at all by keeping the ritual law of Moses, which Christ had abolished, and so had made a way for the Jews and Gentiles to become one in him; since now living faith in him alone united them into one body under that head, without the observance of the law, which is the meaning of so making peace. This note may lead ordinary readers into an understanding of St. Paul's style, and, by making them observe the reason, give them an easier entrance into the meaning, of his figurative expressions.

Ver. 17. To you which were afar off, &c.] To those that were afar off, and to these, &c. that is, Gentiles and Jews. See Junius in Wetstein.

Ver. 18. We both have access by one Spirit] The word προσάγωγη, which we render access, properly refers to the custom of introducing persons into the presence of some prince, or any other greatly their superior. See the Inferences.

Ver. 19. Strangers and foreigners,] If there be any distinction between these two words, ξένοι and παροικιοι, the latter signifies something more than the former, and seems plainly to allude to the case of sojourning strangers among the Jews, who were not incorporated by complete proselytism into the body of the Jewish people, and made, as such proselytes were, fellow-citizens, with equal privileges: and perhaps, when οικιοι τῷ Θεῷ, domestics of God, is added, it may have some relation to that peculiar nearness to God, in which the Jewish priests stood, and refer to that great intimacy of unrestrained converse with God, to which we, as Christians, are admitted. In which respect our privileges seem to resemble, not only those of the people praying in the common court of Israel, but also of the priests, worshipping in the house itself: nay, it is elsewhere added, by a figure which seems beautifully to rise even on this, that we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; Heb. x. 19.

Ver. 20. And are built upon the foundation, &c.] “ And ye are still more closely united to Christ, and to the Father in him, not only as citizens to their supreme magistrate, and as children to their father; but as a building to its foundation, which is another figure under which the church of Christ may be considered in its relation to him (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.), who is a sure foundation, which God himself has laid in Zion, besides which no man can lay any other; but which is ministerially laid both by my preaching (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.), and by the doctrine of the twelve apostles, as master-builders, under Christ, in the New-Testament dispensation (Rev. xxi. 14.); as it also has been in the writings of the ancient prophets (Pl. cxviii. 22. If. xxviii. 16.), which testified of Christ (John v. 39.). The doctrine of all these is in substance the same, with regard to salvation and eternal life by Jesus Christ, who is not only the rock, on which he has built his church (Matth. xvi. 18.); but is also the principal corner-stone, which unites, holds, and binds together both believing Jews and Gentiles in himself as one church,

3 I 2 “ and

21 ^f In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord :

22 ^e In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

^f Ch. 4. 13, 15, 16. Col. 2, 2, 19. Pf. 122. 7. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 25—27. & 14. 37. & 3. 17. & 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Pf. 93. 5. Ezek. 43. 11, 12.
^e See ver. 20. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Ch. 3. 17. John, 4. 23. & 14. 17, 23. & 17. 21—23.

“ and gives strength, solidity, and beauty to the whole spiritual edifice that is erected upon him.” *The heads of Israel*, who bore the weight of government, are called the *chief*, and the *stay*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, ראש, *the corners of the people* (1 Sam. xiv. 38. If. xix. 13.); accordingly Christ is called the *chief corner-stone* and the *head-stone of the corner* (Pf. cxviii. 22.), because the church depends as entirely upon him as its *foundation*, when considered in allusion to a house or building, as it does upon him as its *head*, when considered in allusion to a natural or political body.

Ver. 22. In whom ye also are builded together] I take the sense of this allegory to be as follows, says Mr. Locke: It is plain from the attestation of the apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles who believe in Christ are thereby made members of his kingdom, united together under him their head into such a well-framed body, wherein each person has his proper place, rank, and function, to which he is fitted, that God will accept and delight in them as his people; and live among them as in a well-framed building dedicated to him, whereof the Gentiles make a part; and without any difference put between them, are framed in equality, and promiscuously with believing Jews, by the Spirit of God, to be one people, among whom he will dwell, and be their God.

Inferences on ver. 8. and 18.—St. Paul, in the beginning of this chapter, is speaking of the condition in which the Ephesians were before their conversion from a state of heathenism to the genuine belief of the gospel, and magnifying God's mercy and the exceeding riches of his grace towards them, from the first to the eighth verse; in which he goes on to make them sensible of their obligations to God, who had thus quickened them that *were dead in sins*: for *by grace are ye saved*; that is, “ For it is very fit you should know and consider, that it is by the mere *grace*, or *favour*, or *mercy* of God (as the word signifies) that ye are saved through *faith*; that ye are put into a method and state of salvation, by means of your receiving in sincerity the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is his own act, his mere mercy, that you have terms of acceptance offered you, upon your believing in Christ. The being saved, I say, in this method, is by the *grace* or *mercy* of God; not of yourselves, that is, by no contrivance or appointment of your own;—not owing to yourselves; but it is the gift, the free contrivance, and offer of God to you, that ye should be put into this happy state by the gospel.” this is the meaning of the expression,—and *that not of yourselves*; not, (as it may found in our translation) “ and that *faith*, or *believing*, is not of yourselves, but entirely the gift of God;” (for the word *that*, in the Greek, is of the neuter gender, and so cannot easily be supposed to relate to the word *faith* going before it;) but, “ that or this whole matter,—this your being saved by *faith*, this being called into a state of salvation by the gospel, is not of yourselves, but the gift, the favour, the offer of God, previous to all design and

“ thought of your own.” Then follow those words, *ver. 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast*: that is, “ And as the proposal of this gracious method of salvation was not owing to yourselves and your contrivance, so neither was such a favour merited at the hands of God by any past perfection, by any good behaviour of your own preceding it: for, as I have told you already, *ver. 1 and 5, you were dead in trespasses and sins*, when you were called to the knowledge of this merciful dispensation. And this I add, *Lest any of you should boast*, as if you had deserved at the hands of Almighty God, by your past behaviour, so merciful a dispensation, so gracious a proposal, as is made to you in the gospel.” And then he goes on to assure them farther, that their happy condition is owing entirely to God, who had, without any contrivance or desert of theirs, so ordered affairs by his good providence, that they were now believers in Jesus Christ, and had the offers of salvation upon the terms of the gospel brought home to them.

This therefore is the manifest design of the Apostle in the text;—To raise the gratitude of the Ephesians to Almighty God, and to inspire them with all possible regard to him, by putting them in mind, that they were formerly in a helpless and miserable condition,—dead in sins, void of the true life of reasonable creatures; that they had no thought of themselves of such salvation as had been offered them by the Christian religion; that they had no merit to engage the Almighty to make them such an offer, and preach to them such a state of reconciliation and salvation; that it was of *his grace*, or *favour*, that they were saved from their former evil condition of sin and ignorance, by receiving and believing the gospel; for which they were obliged therefore to magnify the exceeding riches of God's mercy towards them in Christ, and not to attribute any thing to themselves, who were before this void of every thing that could be pleasing to Almighty God, or influence him to shew them so great and remarkable a kindness. “ It is by *grace* that ye are delivered from your former miserable condition; it is an act of grace that ye are saved through *faith*, or put into a state of salvation by believing the gospel; and this being saved by this method, and by means of this believing, is not of yourselves, but wholly owing, in respect to the merit of it, and to the first moving cause of it, to the good will of God, whose free offer and gift it is.” Having thus guarded against any erroneous or pernicious sense, in which Christians may be led to understand the passage in question, it may not be improper to consider briefly in what sense it is that Christians can be said to be saved through *faith*, or by believing in *Jesus Christ*.

And 1st, We may well be said to be saved through *faith*, because it is by believing in Christ that we come to know and embrace those terms which are offered by God for our salvation and happiness. He came to save us; and only by closing in with his proposals in full confidence, we can be saved:

CHAP. III.

The hidden mystery, that the Gentiles should be saved, was made known to St. Paul by revelation: and to him was that grace given, that he should preach it: he desireth them not to faint for his tribulation, and prayeth that they may perceive the great love of Christ toward them.

[Anno Domini 62.]

FOR this cause I Paul, the ^a prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 (If ye have heard of the ^b dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward :

3 How that ^c by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; ^d as I wrote * afore in few words;

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the ^e mystery of Christ,

^a Acts 28. 16, 17. & 21. 27. & 26. 23, 29. Philem. 10. Gal. 5. 11. Ch. 4. 1. & 6. 20. Col. 1. 24. & 4. 3, 18. 2 Tim. 1. 8. & 2. 10. Phil. 1. 13.
^b 1 Cor. 4. 1. & 3. 13. Ch. 4. 7. Acts, 9. 15. & 13. 2, 46. & 22. 4. & 26. 17, 18. Rom. 1. 5. & 11. 13. & 12. 3. & 15. 15, 16. Gal. 1. 15, 16. & 2. 9. Ver. 8. Col. 1. 25, 26. 1 Tim. 1. 11. & 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 11. ^c Acts, 26. 16, 17. Gal. 1. 12, 16. & 2. 2. Rom. 16. 27. Col. 1. 26. Ver. 6. ^d Ch. 1. 9, 10. & 2. 13, 19, 20. ^e O: a little before. ^f Luke, 2. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 4. 2. & 2. 2, 6, 7. & 14. 2. Rom. 11. 11, 12, 25. & 15. 15, 19. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Ver. 5, 6. Ch. 16. 19.

saved: and this we cannot do without believing in him as the God-man, as the Mediator between God and man, and as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and receiving him as such. This, therefore, being absolutely necessary *, we may well find salvation attributed to this, which is the first moving principle of the instrumental kind towards it; and without which we should not go one step forward in that way to salvation, which he came to point out to us. He is *the way, and the truth, and the life*; and without knowing him, and believing in him, how should we know the way, or the path to that eternal life which he came to unfold to us; who otherwise must have wandered every one after the peculiar imagination and humour of our own hearts? —As *salvation*, therefore, comes in the method proposed by Christ, so may it well be attributed to the *believing in him*, because that alone can put us into the method proposed by him, and that is the *only* means of pardon and acceptance through the Beloved.—We are justified by faith alone, that Christ may have all the glory.

2dly, Christians are *saved through faith*, because it is the principle of their obedience, and of all their good actions. It is *the tree* which bears that *good fruit*, without which there is no salvation.

In these senses, therefore, and on these accounts, amongst others, great things might well be said of faith in the New Testament, and salvation attributed to it; but the great point in which we are concerned, is, not to be deceived in a matter of such importance; and to that end, not to interpret any one expression of the New Testament so as to contradict its plainest and most repeated declarations.

Let the conclusion, therefore, of this *first* head of our *inferences* be to this effect: —“*Faith* is an act of the mind most acceptable to God; *faith* in his Son *saves* us, as it puts us in the secure way to salvation, as it brings to us, by virtue of the Divine promises, justification and pardon, and as it is the principle of all our Christian graces, and of all our best and most godlike behaviour. This *faith* alone,—that is, the method proposed in the gospel, without the works of the ceremonial law of Moses, is sufficient to secure to us our future happiness: but *faith* alone, in another sense,—that is a *belief* in Christ, with-

“out *holiness* and *obedience* to his laws, an empty unfruitful faith, accompanied with an impenitent life, will condemn us at last. We are not *saved through faith*, or by believing in Christ, unless we be *influenced* by it; For faith is requisite to holiness and practice; and *without holiness no man can see the Lord*. Faith is indispensably necessary in order to salvation; and so likewise is a holy and good life indispensably necessary in order to salvation: or, in other words, a *faith working by love*, and manifesting itself by good works, is that alone which will be of any account to us at the last; *for as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*.” See the *Reflections*.

The words in verse 18. rightly understood, will give us a distinct conception of the nature of the Christian religion, as it stands distinguished from all others, whether natural, or pretending to revelation. All the false religions pretend to give *access* to God or the gods, by instructing men in what manner to approach him by prayer and supplication; how to please him, and obtain his favour and protection, by such works as each religion accounts to be holy and acceptable to God; and how to reconcile ourselves to him, after having offended him by our transgressions, through sorrow and repentance, or such other means as have been devised and instituted as effectual to this end. But the *access* to God which the gospel opens to us, is to be had only under the guidance and direction of his Holy Spirit, and in the name and through the mediation of God’s own eternal Son. This *access* is the only one which the Christian religion knows any thing of; for we cannot come to God but by his Holy Spirit, and through his Son, and this is what no other religion does or can pretend to.

To give us a distinct conception of these words, and of the different offices of the Son and the Spirit, we must conceive the Spirit of God as always present with us, and the Son as always in the presence of the Father. The Spirit dwells with the faithful to guide and direct them, to begin, second, and encourage all their good desires, to help them in overcoming their infirmities, and to labour together with them in the work of their salvation, to make their calling and election sure. The Eternal Son of God

* I am here only speaking of those who are called to be members of the *Christian* dispensation. Every allowance which is consistent with infinite mercy and justice, will be made for in-

ferior degrees of light; though all must be saved through *faith*. See the notes on the Epistle to the Romans.

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

^f Mat. 13. 17. Joh. 16. 13. Acts, 10. 28. & 15. 32. & 21. 10. Rom. 16. 25, 26. Col. 1. 25, 26. 1 Cor. 2. 12. & 12. 10, 28. Ch. 2. 20. & 4. 11—13. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. Tit. 1. 1—3. 1 Pet. 1. 10—12.

is at the right hand of the Majesty on high; there he is our advocate; he intercedes for us; he receives and offers up our prayers; he obtains for us a remission of our sins, in virtue of the one oblation which he once made of himself upon the cross, the memorial of which is ever in the sight of God.

This will teach us what it is to have *access by the Spirit through Christ*; for the Spirit abideth with us, he is at our right hand, and by his happy influence it is that we draw near to Christ, and by him approach to the Father. The Son is our High-priest clothed with majesty and power, and seated at the right hand of God, able to save all who will come to him; through whose powerful and always prevailing intercession, the way is open to pardon and reconciliation. The Spirit is our Comforter, given us to dwell and abide with us, to be a new principle of life within us, to quicken our mortal bodies, that, dying to sin, we may live unto God through holiness. To draw men to God is the work of the Spirit, who therefore resides and dwells with men: to reconcile God to man is the work of our High-priest, who lives in the glory of God; making continual intercession for us. Nay, both the Father and the Son, as well as the Spirit, make their abode with the faithful soul. See John xiv. 16, 23.

And now, consider the calamitous condition of mankind under what view you please, you will always find a proper remedy provided by the mercy of God. If you reflect upon the holiness of God, and his hatred of sin, and begin to fear that he can never be reconciled to sinners; Take courage; the work is difficult,—but the Son of God has undertaken it; and how great soever the distance between God and you is, yet, through faith in the Eternal Son, you may have *access unto him*. If still you fear, that all may again be lost through your own weakness and inability; Even here help is at hand; the Spirit of God is your support, he is the pledge and earnest of the redemption of the faithful.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Behold the miserable state of every man by nature.

1. We are dead in trespasses and sins,—spiritually dead, as criminals under the curse and condemnation of a broken law, and the life of God extinguished in our souls; and in this state of desperate misery we must for ever continue, till redeemed by the blood, and quickened by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

2. Though dead to God, we have been but too much alive to the practice of sin; *wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world*; our spirit apostate; our ways perverse, conformed to the maxims, and copying the manners of a world that lieth in the wicked one; the consequence of which cannot but be condemnation with the world, unless we repent, and are converted.

3. We were at that time the bond-slaves of the god of this world; acting according to the instigation of the prince

of the power of the air, the devil, who, with his legions, is permitted to exercise sometimes his power and agency in the aerial regions, and is *the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, by himself, and those foul fiends his fellows, tempting, seducing, governing, hardening the unbelieving and disobedient. *Among whom also we all, Jews as well as Gentiles, even apostles as well as others, had our conversation in times past, enslaved by sin, and led captive by the devil at his will; a state how fearful!*

4. We then lived in *the lusts of our flesh*, indulging every corrupt appetite, and *fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*, as the beasts which perish; devoted to the gratification of brutal passions, and in our souls filled with pride, envy, malice, hatred, revenge, and the whole train of spiritual wickednesses; disposed to every abomination, and only wanting temptation and opportunity to commit every iniquity in which body or soul can be engaged.

5. As the source of all our evil, *we are by nature the children of wrath*, obnoxious to the displeasure of that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and born with every evil propensity. The more we are acquainted with this our natural state of desperate corruption, remediless guilt, and hopeless misery, the more we shall value the unsearchable riches of Christ, and be filled with admiration, love, and praise, in the view of an incarnate Redeemer.

2dly, With exultation and wonder should we contemplate the astonishing mystery of redeeming love. Here in its brightest glories we see it displayed; and God in that delightful attribute of mercy appears exalted in the highest.

1. The fential cause of our redemption is God's infinite love and grace, who is *rich in mercy*, the source inexhaustible of all our blessings, *for his great love wherewith he loved us*; his very name and nature being Love, and only Love, to all who submit to be saved by his grace; which is the only way of salvation, because he will not, he cannot, give his glory to another.

2. What serves as a foil to set off in the most distinguished lustre this mercy of our God, is the state in which we lay, *even when we were dead in trespasses and sins*; and, instead of any thing to engage his love, had in us every thing to excite his loathing: even then, when we were foul, odious, and in a condition as desperate as that of the fallen angels, did the God of all grace regard us, and plucked us as brands from the burning. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

3. The inestimable blessings conferred upon such wretched sinners, coming to him in repentance and faith, and cleaving to him perseveringly in love, are, [1.] *Life in Christ our living head*. *He hath quickened us together with Christ*, by the same Spirit by which Christ was raised from the dead. *By grace ye are saved*; and thus, through the transcendently rich and unmerited love of God, restored to his favour here, and, if faithful, will be crowned with glory hereafter, through the same grace. [2.] *He hath also raised*

6^s That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of

his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7^h Whereof I was made a minister, accord-

^f Rom. 8. 15—17. & 7. 8—12. 1 Cor. 12. 27. Gal. 3. 9, 14, 28, 29. Ch. 1. 3. & 2. 13—22. ^h Acts, 9. 15. & 26. 16—18. Rom. 1. 5. & 11. 13. & 15. 18, 19. 2 Cor. 3. 6. & 4. 1. & 5. 18—20. Gal. 2. 8. Col. 1. 23, 25, 26. Ch. 1. 19. Sec ver. 2, 8.

raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: as God the Father raised up Christ to glory, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, so he has raised us up, all true believers, both Jews and Gentiles together, without distinction, and has made us to sit together with him in the heavenly mansions, by faith, hope, meditation, contemplation, and divine union and communion with him; and, if we be faithful, will seat us there with Christ for ever.

4. We have the principal end which God proposes in this great salvation. *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus; encouraging to the latest days of time poor and perishing sinners to come and trust in this boundless mercy revealed in the gospel; and that in the better world, when all the glory of his grace in brightest colours shall appear, he might be the object of ceaseless praise and adoration to saints and angels through all the countless ages of eternity.*

5. The means appointed to convey all these blessings to us is *faith*. *For by grace ye are saved, freely through faith, which is the way wherein we receive all the great and precious promises; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and, like all other blessings, flows from his boundless love, and is the work of his Spirit in our hearts; that the glory of the divine grace might not suffer the least diminution.—Not of works, lest any man should boast: neither the salvation itself, nor the faith whereby you are made partakers of it, is owing to any good works done by you, as the meritorious or moving cause of it: as there was certainly nothing of that kind to be found among the Gentile part of you, to induce the great and holy God to shew such high favour to you, who, in violation of the light and law of nature (as it is generally called), or rather of that Divine light which was afforded you under your Heathen dispensation, practised all abominable iniquities; (See Rom. 1. 18—32.) so there was nothing to engage God's love and kindness among the Jewish part of you, who, in contradiction to the clearer light and higher obligations of revelation, had shamefully perverted and transgressed the law of Moses in numberless instances (See Rom. ii. iii.) But God has manifested his wondrous mercy to you in offering to you the grace of the gospel in these guilty and deplorable circumstances, that all pretences might be equally cut off from one and the other of you, as if it were owing to any works of righteousness performed by you; lest any one among you should be so vain-glorious as to take a share of that honour to himself, which belongs to God alone; or should vaunt and glory in himself, as if he had done something to render him worthy of mercy, which, indeed, in this wretched state of things, was absolutely impossible.*

6. Though our salvation be purely of grace, God has taken care to engage to himself, by the strongest ties, the hearts of those who accept of his offers, yield to his grace, and submit to all the operations of his Holy Spirit, whilst all the glory is his own. *For we are his workmanship, cre-*

ated in Christ Jesus; all that is excellent in us comes from his free grace through faith: our souls, renewed by divine operation, now produce the genuine fruits of righteousness; he works all that is good in his faithful saints; and, though he excludes their glorying, he both requires and strengthens them unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them; for he will save none but those whose faith works by love, supreme love to himself, and pure disinterested love flowing therefrom to all mankind. Note, The doctrines of grace, far from loosening, as some vainly imagine, the obligations to morality, can alone effectually engage and enable the soul for the practice of righteousness and true holiness.

7. He reminds the Ephesians of what they should ever keep warm upon their memories, of awaken their gratitude, and bind their hearts to God. *Wherefore, remember that ye being in time passed Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; treated by the native Jews with contempt and disdain, and indeed excluded from all the peculiar privileges which they enjoyed: that at that time ye were without Christ, having neither knowledge of him, nor union with him; being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, out of the pale of God's visible church, and strangers from the covenants of promise, which were openly made manifest, by promise only, to Abraham's natural seed; having no hope, at least no well-grounded one, of God's favour, and life eternal; and without God in the world, even while you worshipped gods many, being without the least knowledge of the one true Jehovah. But now in Christ Jesus, since by faith ye have been united to him, and heard and embrace his gospel, ye who sometimes were far off from all good and all hope, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, received into a state of favour and reconciliation with God, and are heirs of the eternal blessedness which he has purchased for, and will bestow upon, all his faithful saints. Note, Sinners, in their natural state, are far removed from God, and must, but for the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, remain so for ever.*

3dly, All the blessings in time and eternity which sinners can ever hope for, flow down to them through the channel of a crucified Jesus. *For he is our peace, having reconciled us to God by his own blood, who hath made both one, uniting the believing Jews and Gentiles together in one body under himself their common head, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, which, till now, excluded the nations from the blessings peculiar to the Jews; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that which had been the cause of such enmity between Jews and Gentiles, even the ceremonial law, called the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which, as they pointed all to Christ, were now fulfilled by him, and abrogated, he designing for to make of twain, of believing Jews and Gentiles, one new man, cementing them together in one church, and forming his own blessed image alike in their hearts; so making peace between them, as members of one body, united by faith and love in him; and that he might reconcile*

both

ing to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am ^l less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that ^k I should

^l 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. 1 Tim. 1. 13, 15. 2 Cor. 11. 5. Gen. 32. 10. & 17. 13. & 13. 8, 15—19. 1 Cor. 15. 9. Gal. 1. 16. & 2. 8, 9. 1 Tim. 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 11.

^k Ver. 2. Acts, 9. 15. & 13. 2. & 22. 21. & 26. 16—18. Rom. 7. 5.

both unto God, who, by nature and practice, were alike estranged from him, and must have perished together, but for the same atoning blood which he shed, in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; the ceremonial law, the great cause of variance between Jews and Gentiles, being abolished; and came and preached peace, by his divinely-constituted ministers, to you, Gentiles, which were afar off, inviting you, who were at the greatest distance from his church, to come and find pardon and peace with God; and the like message he sent to them that were nigh to the Jewish people, who needed the same gracious salvation, and could only, through a Redeemer, be saved from the curses of a broken law; for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father; the same Spirit of adoption being shed abroad in the hearts of both; the same Advocate standing to plead for us; the same gracious God appearing as the Father of mercies, and ready alike to hear and answer our petitions. Now therefore ye, believing Gentiles, are no more strangers and foreigners, as before, but fellow-citizens with the saints, partaking of the same privileges, and of the household of God, entitled, through faith in this Divine Saviour, to the same inheritance; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, who both concurred in the same testimony, leading the souls of sinners to Jesus Christ himself, as being the chief corner-stone, on whom alone they could safely build for eternity; in whom all the building fitly framed together, of Jews and Gentiles, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, daily accessions of converts being made to it; a temple infinitely more glorious than that of Solomon; a living temple, where the Lord peculiarly dwells, as in his own house; in whom ye also are builded together, and compose part of the glorious fabric, that ye might be for an habitation of God through the Spirit, who takes up his blest abode among you, and in your hearts, until, if ye be faithful unto death, ye shall come to the perfect enjoyment of him for ever in heaven. Note, There is but one safe foundation on which a sinful soul can build, and that is Jesus Christ.

CHAP. III.

THE Apostle having formerly shewed, that the faithful among the Gentiles, though uncircumcised, have redemption through Christ's blood, chap. i. 7. and, as the sons of God, are heirs of heaven, chap. i. 11. and made into one church with the Jews, so as to grow together into an holy temple for the Lord to officiate in, ch. ii. 21. he, in this chapter, informed the Ephesians that his doctrine concerning the Gentiles was so offensive to the Jews, that it had occasioned his imprisonment, first at Cæsarea, and then at Rome, ver. 1.—But he assured them, and all in the province of Asia, who were not acquainted with his apostolic commission, ver. 2.—That by revelation God had made that doctrine known to him, as he had before told them in few words, chap. i. 8, 9. And to recommend it to the Ephesians, and the other brethren in Asia, he termed it

The mystery, ver. 3.—and The mystery of Christ, ver. 4.—and observed, that in other generations, it was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now made known to his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit, ver. 5.—The short account of which mystery is this, that the faithful among the Gentiles are joint-heirs with the faithful among the Jews, and a joint-body, and joint-partakers of God's promise concerning Christ, that is, of all the blessings promised to the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ, ver. 6.—which therefore he terms the unsearchable riches of Christ, ver. 8.—These riches the apostle was appointed, not to conceal, but to preach, that all men might know what a grand, and honourable, and advantageous society, the fellowship of the mystery of God and of Christ is, which is now established by the building of the Christian church, ver. 9.—Nay, he assured the Ephesians that the angelic hosts themselves have acquired a more comprehensive idea than formerly of the multiform wisdom of God, through the fellowship of the mystery, or church, ver. 10.—as it is now constituted, according to the arrangement, which, from the beginning, God had made of the dispensations of religion, to prepare the world for the coming of Christ Jesus, ver. 11.—Next, as one of the chief privileges which all the members of the fellowship of the mystery of Christ enjoy in the present constitution of the church, the apostle mentioned liberty of praying to God through the mediation of Christ, and access to his presence at all times, with assurance of being heard, ver. 12.

But, as the apostle was now in bonds for maintaining the before-mentioned doctrine concerning the Gentiles, he intreated the Ephesians not to be discouraged on account of his sufferings for them, which were their glory, ver. 13.—and told them, that his prayer to God was, that Christ, the head of the fellowship of the mystery, might dwell in the hearts of the Ephesians through faith; and that, as constituent parts of the temple of God, being rooted and founded in the love of Christ, they might be able to comprehend with all the saints the different dimensions of that great fabric, the church, which is the temple of God, composed of believers of all nations, ver. 14—18.—and, as constituent parts of the temple of God, be themselves filled with all the fulness of God, ver. 19.—To conclude, the honourableness of the fellowship of the mystery, and the inestimable worth of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which belong to the members of that fellowship, together with the grandeur of the spiritual temple, of which they are the constituent parts, making a strong impression on the apostle's mind, he ended his account of these subjects with a sublime doxology to God, the original founder of that noble fellowship, who, by the power with which he now worketh in the members thereof, hath shewn himself able and willing, through Christ, to bestow blessings on them in the life to come, if faithful unto death, blessings exceeding abundantly beyond all that they can ask or conceive. For which reason, the apostle devoutly prayed, that glory might be ascribed

preach among the Gentiles the ¹ unsearchable riches of Christ ;

9 And to make all *men* see what is the fellowship of the mystery, ^m which from the begin-

¹ Pf. 31. 19. If. 64. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 9. Ch. 1. 7. & 2. 7. Ver. 19. Col. 1. 27. & 2. 9, 10. & 3. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Ch. 1. 3. John. 1. 14, 16. Phil. 4. 19. ^m Ch. 1. 9. & 2. 13—22. See ver. 3—6. Rom. 16. 25, 26. Col. 1. 2, 3—27. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 1. 20. Heb. 1. 1. 2. Tit. 1. 2, 3.

to him in the church, for Christ Jesus the head of the church, and the dispenser of all the blessings belonging to the Christian fellowship; and that during all the successions of eternal ages, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. For this cause, &c.] This chapter throws back a great light on those which precede, and more clearly opens the design of this epistle: for St. Paul here in plain words tells the Ephesians that he was by particular favour and appointment ordained a preacher of the doctrine which was a mystery till now, being hid from former ages; namely, that the Gentiles should be co-heirs with the believing Jews, and, making one body or people with them, should be equally partakers of the promises under the Messiah. Whereupon he exhorts them not to be dismayed, or to depart in the least from the belief or profession of this truth, upon his being persecuted and in bonds on that account; for his suffering for it, who was the preacher and propagator of it, was so far from being a just discouragement to them from standing firmly in the belief of it, that it ought to be to them a glory, and a confirmation of this eminent truth of the gospel which he peculiarly taught: and thereupon he tells them he makes it his prayer to God that they may be strengthened herein, and be able to comprehend the extent of the love of God in Christ; not confined to the Jewish nation and constitution, as the Jews imagined, but far surpassing the thoughts of those, who, presuming on their own knowledge, would confine it to such only as were members of the Jewish church, and observers of their ceremonies.

Ver. 2. If ye have heard] Since, or forasmuch as ye have heard.

Ver. 3. The mystery (as I wrote afore, &c.) Though St. Peter was by a vision from God sent to Cornelius, a Gentile, Acts x. yet we do not find that this purpose of God's calling the Gentiles to be his people equally with the Jews, without any regard to circumcision or the Mosaic rites, was revealed to him, or any other of the apostles, as a doctrine which they were to preach and publish in the world; neither indeed was it needful that it should be any part of their commission to mix that in their message to the Jews, which would make them stop their ears, and refuse to hearken to the other parts of the gospel which they were more concerned to know and be instructed in. It may be asked, "To what purpose is that contained in the parenthesis in this and the following verse concerning himself?"—And indeed, without having an eye on the design of this epistle, it is difficult to give an account of it; but that being carried in view, there is nothing plainer nor more pertinent and persuasive: for what could be of more force to make them stand firm in the doctrine he had taught them, of their being exempt from circumcision and the observances of the law? If you have heard,—and I assure you in my epistle that this mystery of the gospel was revealed in a particular manner to me from heaven,—the very reading of this is enough to satisfy you that I am well

instructed in that truth, and that you may safely depend upon what I have taught you concerning this point, notwithstanding I am in prison for it; which is a thing wherein you ought to glory, since I suffer for a truth wherein you are so nearly concerned. See ch. vi. 19, 20.

Ver. 4. Whereby when ye read,] By attending to which. It has been observed, that what follows is the highest encomium made by the Apostle on any of his own writings; and thence it has been concluded, that this is the richest and noblest of all the epistles; which it is thought was peculiarly intended to be so, to reward the generous zeal of the Ephesians in burning their *curious books*, by a book of *divine knowledge* infinitely more valuable than any or all of them. See Acts, xix. 19.

Ver. 5. Which in other ages was not made known.] The following verse so plainly determines this passage to the calling of the Gentiles, that there can be no controversy as to the general sense of it. It was, indeed, known long before that the Gentiles were to be added to the church; but it was not known that they should be heirs of the same inheritance, and partakers of the peculiar promise of the Spirit. The Jews rather thought of their being slaves to them; and least of all did they imagine, that the middle wall of their ceremonies should be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the full privileges of God's people without circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic law; which the Christian converts among them heard of as fruit with great amazement. See Acts, x. 45. xi. 18.

Ver. 6. Partakers of his promise,] Namely, of the Spirit. Comp. Gal. iii. 14. The phrase, *Διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*, rendered by the gospel, signifies in the time of the gospel.

Ver. 7. Whereof I was made a minister, &c.] Though St. Paul does not, in express words, deny others to be made ministers of this doctrine, (for it neither suited his modesty, nor the respect he had for the other apostles, to do so;) yet his expression here will be found strongly to imply it, especially if we read attentively the two following verses: for this was a necessary instruction to one who was sent to convert the Gentiles, though such as were sent to their brethren the Jews were not appointed to promulgate it. This one *Apostle of the Gentiles*, by the success of his preaching to the Gentiles the attestation of miracles and the gift of the Holy Ghost, joined to what St. Peter had done by special direction in the case of Cornelius, would be enough, in due season, to convince the other apostles of this truth, as we may see it did, Acts, xv. and Gal. ii. 6—9. And of what consequence, and how much St. Paul thought the preaching of this doctrine his peculiar business, may be seen by what he says, ch. vi. 19, 20. It is upon the account of his preaching this doctrine, and displaying to the world this concealed truth, which he calls every where a *hidden mystery*, that he gives to what he had preached the distinguishing title of *my gospel*; (Rom. xvi. 25.) in which he is concerned that God should establish them. The insisting so much on this,

ding of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ :

10 ° To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 ° According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord :

12 ° In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

^a Pf. 33. 6. John, 1. 3. Col. 1. 16, 17. Heb. 1. 2. ^b 1 Pet. 1. 12. Rom. 8. 38. Ch. 1. 21. Col. 1. 16. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Pf. 103. 20. ^c Rom. 11. 33. 1 Cor. 2. 7. & 1. 23, 24, 30. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Prov. viii. ^d Ch. 1. 4, 9, 11. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Rom. 8. 28—30. ix. xi. 1f. 46. 10. & 14, 24, 27. ^e John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. Rom. 5. 2. Ch. 2. 18. Heb. 10. 19—22. & 4. 14, 16. Acts, 4. 12. ^f Phil. 2. 14. 1 Thes. 3. 7. Col. 1. 24. 2 Cor. 1. 6. Ver. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 10. ^g 2 Cor. 1. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 23. Col. 1. 9—11. Phil. 1. 3—11. Ch. 1. 16—19. ^h See Ch. 1. 10, 21. Col. 1. 16—20. Phil. 2. 9. Rev. 5. 8—14.

this,—that it was the special favour and commission of God, to him in particular, to preach this doctrine of God's purpose of calling the Gentiles to the word,—was not out of vanity or boasting, but was of great use to his present purpose; as carrying with it a strong reason why the Ephesians should rather believe *him* to whom, as their apostle, it was made manifest, and committed to be preached, than *the Jews*, from whom it had been concealed, and kept as a mystery; and was in itself *infrutable* by men, though of the best natural parts and endowments. See Gal. ii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.

Ver. 8. *Who am less than the least*] The Apostle here makes a new word, which, as grammarians would speak, is the comparative degree of the superlative,—ἐλαχίστοισιν, which no translation can fully equal, or very happily express. No doubt he refers to what he had been formerly, when he persecuted the church of God. *The unsearchable riches of Christ*, means that abundant treasure of mercy, grace, and favour, laid up in Jesus Christ, not only for the Jews, but for the whole heathen world, even for all of them who would believe; which was beyond the reach of human sagacity to discover, and could be known only by revelation.

Ver. 9. *Which—hath been hid in God,*] It is evident that here is an allusion to the burying of a treasure in some secret place; (comp. Matth. xiii. 44. where the same word is used;) as there may also be in the word ἀνεξετάστον, *unsearchable*, ver. 8. which properly signifies, *what cannot be traced out*; and it is certain, that, though something is now known concerning this glorious mystery, yet there is an incomparably greater part, concerning which we only know in the general that it is a rich treasure, without particularly knowing either what or how much it is. Mr. Locke, in an elaborate note, pleads, as Diodati has done before him, that the latter clause of this verse refers not to the creation of the world, but to the renovation of it; (see ch. ii. 10.) and so may be considered as an intimation, that the Father always intended that the Son should have the honour of forming all things anew; and therefore concealed the mystery till after Christ was come. But the words, if taken in the most extensive sense, contain both a certain and a pertinent truth.

Ver. 10. *The principalities, &c.*] The prophecies of the Old Testament gave strong intimations, at least, of the intended calling of the Gentiles into the church; and the

angels seem expressly to refer to it in what they said to the shepherds, and in their anthem at the nativity of Christ. Luke, ii. 10, 14. We suppose, therefore, that the Apostle here would lead the thoughts of his readers to the series of divine dispensations, as gradually opening this great discovery, and not merely to what he preached concerning it; though, doubtless, that greatly illustrated the scheme.

Ver. 11. *According to the eternal purpose*] Mr. Locke would render the Greek, *According to that pre-disposition of the ages, or several dispensations which he made in Christ Jesus*: which, by the pre-ordination of God's purpose, were all regulated and constituted in him: and Dr. Whitby, taking it in the same sense, explains it of Christ's being promised in the first age to Adam, typified in the second to the Jews, and in the last age preached to all the world.

Ver. 12. *In whom we have boldness, &c.*] “Through whom we have freedom of speech in our approaches to the throne of grace, and have access with confidence of being heard, as being assured of audience and acceptance, through faith in him.”

Ver. 14. *Unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*] In the foregoing chapter, ver. 19. St. Paul tells the Ephesians, that now they believe in Christ, they are no longer *strangers and foreigners*, but *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*. Here he goes on, and tells them, they are of the family, or lineage of God, being, jointly with Jesus Christ, the sons of God. Nothing could be of greater force to continue them steadfast in the doctrine which he had preached to them, and in which he makes it his principal business here to confirm them; namely, that they needed not be circumcised, and submit to the law of Moses, as they were already, by faith in Christ, the sons of God, and of the same family with Christ himself.

Ver. 15. *Of whom the whole family*] As Christ is the last person mentioned before the words, *of whom*, it seems reasonable to interpret this clause as referring to him; though others rather choose to understand it of the Father, who is the principal subject of the foregoing sentence. The word *heaven* may be here taken in a great latitude, for all the regions of happiness of the invisible world. The Jewish writers call *heaven, the upper, and earth, the lower family of God*.

Ver.

16 That he would grant you, ^x according to the riches of his glory, ^y to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 ^z That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being ^a rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to ^b comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to ^c know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with ^d all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is ^e able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him *be* ^f glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

¹ Ch. 1. 7. & 2. 7. Rom. 9. 23. Phil. 4. 19. Col. 1. 27. John, 1. 14, 16. ² 2 Cor. 4. 16. Zech. 10. 12. If. 40. 29—31. Pf. 138. 3. Ch. 6. 10. 1 Thes. 5. 23. 2 Thes. 3. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 1. Rom. 7. 22. Col. 2. 2. & 1. 11. ³ See Ch. 2. 21. 22. John, 14, 23. & 17. 23. & 15. 4. Gal. 2. 20. Col. 1. 27. Acts, 20. 21. & 16. 31. ⁴ 1 John, 4. 19. Rom. 5. 5. Col. 2. 7. & 1. 23. 1 Cor. 13. 4—7. Gal. 5. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. ⁵ Job, 11. 7—9. Ch. 1. 18, 23. 1 Tim. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Col. 1. 10. & 2. 9, 10. Ver. 3. Col. 1. 6, 23. Mat. 25. 19, 20. 1 Tim. 2. 4. Pf. 103. 17. & 86. 15. John, 14. 3. Rev. 3. 21. ⁶ Phil. 3. 8—12. 1 John, 4. 8, 16. Gal. 2. 20. Ch. 5. 2. John, 10. 10, 11. Phil. 4. 7. ⁷ John, 1, 14, 16. Ch. 1. 21. & 4. 10. Col. 1. 19. & 2. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 1. 50. Rom. 8. 32. 1 Cor. 15. 28. Pf. 16. 5, 6 & 43. 4. ⁸ Gen. 17. 1. & 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Mat. 18. 26. Rom. 16. 25. Jude, 24. Col. 1. 29. 1 Kings, 3. 13. 2 Sam. 7. 19. ⁹ Rom. 11. 36. & 16. 27. Heb. 12. 21. 1 Pet. 4. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 17.

Ver. 16. *The riches of his glory,*] His-glorious riches: the glorious abundance of graces which he has to bestow.

Ver. 18. *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*] It has often been observed, that this text is extremely emphatical.—Bodies are well known to have only three dimensions, *length* and *breadth*, and *thickness*; but the Apostle divides this last into its depth downwards, and its height upwards, measuring from the middle point; and so makes use of it to express the *depth of misery*, from which the love of God delivers us; as well as the *height of glory*, to which it exalts the faithful.

Ver. 19. *And to know the love of Christ,*] There seems to be no reason why we should confine the interpretation of this text merely to the love of Christ in calling the Gentiles. Well may we recollect, on this occasion, all that *love* which Christ has displayed in redeeming his faithful saints, out of every nation and kingdom under heaven, Gentiles as well as Jews, from final misery, and exalting them to eternal glory: and this is so remarkable and admirable, that the most extensive explication of this text must certainly be the most proper. Nor can the phrase of its *surpassing knowledge*, merely signify its exceeding the Jewish dispensation, which is seldom, if ever, called *knowledge*; but its exceeding our most elevated conceptions. By *knowing* is meant, our *experiencing*, or *knowing experimentally*; and to *know what passeth knowledge*, is a figure called *catachresis*, which greatly enhances the beauty of the expression. It has been observed, that there is in this verse an allusion to the temple; expressing the Apostle's wish that the foundation might be so extensively and deeply laid, that a superstructure may be raised, extending itself to such a magnificent length and breadth, and height, as to be fitted to receive and lodge the sacred guest, that he might dwell, as it were, uncrowded in their hearts; and in this view the train of thought appears truly noble. The phrase, *fulness of God*, means, "such fulness as God is wont to bestow;" that is to say, wherein there is nothing wanting to any one, but every one is filled to the utmost of his capacity;—a fulness of all those gifts and graces which any one shall need, and which may be useful to him or the church.

Ver. 21. *Throughout all ages, &c.*] The original contains one of St. Paul's self-invented, and most expressive phrases, which we may defy any version fully to express;—*through all the successions of an endless eternity*, may come something near it; but even this, emphatical as it may seem, falls very short of the sublimity and spirit of the original.

Inferences.—St. Paul's *understanding in the mystery of Christ*, is just matter of perpetual joy to the *whole Christian* world, who have thence derived so much of their knowledge and of their hope. Let us congratulate ourselves and each other on the propagation of so glorious a system of divine truth, which had so long been concealed from ages and generations. The apostles and prophets were raised up by God to receive and reveal it, and we are entered on the blessed fruits of their labours. Let us learn from them to set a due value on our participation in that inheritance, on our union to that body, to which by the gospel we are called.

May it particularly teach us that *humility* which was so conspicuous, so amiable, so admirable in St. Paul. This excellent man, who stood in the foremost rank of Christians, of ministers, of apostles, yet labours for words to express the sense he had of his own meanness and unworthiness, and commits a kind of *solecism* in language, that he might lay himself as *low* as possible; using the most *diminutive* term that could be, to describe himself as one who, in his own esteem, was *less than the least of all saints!* And shall *we* then exalt ourselves, and be proud of the trifling distinctions which raise our obscure heads a little above some of our brethren?

Let those in particular who have the honour of being called to the sacred office of the ministry, consider how reasonable it is, that, instead of being puffed up with it, they should rather be humbled, when they reflect how unworthy of it the best of men are, and in how defective a manner the most faithful discharge it; while yet the grace is given them to preach the riches of Christ, his *unsearchable riches*. Let these be made the grand subject of their preaching; and let all the course of it be directed, in a proper

CHAP. IV.

He exhorteth to unity; and declareth that God therefore giveth divers gifts unto men, that his church might be edified and grow up in Christ: he calleth them from the impurity of the Gentiles, to put on the new man, and to cast off lying, and corrupt communication.

[Anno Domini 62.]

I THEREFORE, the ^a prisoner * of the Lord, beseech you that ye ^b walk worthy

of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 ^c With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 ^d Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is* ^e one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in ^f one hope of your calling;

5 ^g One Lord, ^h one faith, ⁱ one baptism,

6 ^k One God and Father of all, who *is* above

^a See Ch. 3. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 20. * Or in the Lord. ^b Gen. 17. 1. & 5. 24. & 6. 9. 1 Cor. 7. 24. Phil. 1. 27. & 4. 8. Col. 1. 10. 1 Thes. 2. 12. & 4. 1, 2, 12. Tit. 2. 11—14. 1 Pet. 1. 15. 2 Pet. 1. 3—11. ^c Acts, 20. 19. 1 Cor. 13. 4. 7. 2 Cor. 6. 6. Gal. 5. 22. Phil. 2. 3. Col. 1. 11. & 3. 12—14. 1 Thes. 5. 14. ^d 1 Cor. 1. 10. & 12. 13. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 3. 3, 15. Col. 3. 14. Rom. 14. 17, 19. ^e John, 17. 21—23. Rom. 12. 5. Ch. 2. 16, 22. 1 Cor. 12. 4. 11—13. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. & 11. 2, 4. ^f Acts, 15. 11. Ch. 1. 18. Rom. 8. 23, 25. Gal. 5. 5. Tit. 2. 2. Heb. 6. 17—19. Rom. 5. 4, 5. 1 Pet. 1. 13. 1 John, 3. 2, 3. ^g 1 Cor. 1. 2, 13. & 8. 6. & 11. 5. ^h 2 Cor. 11. 4. Gal. 1. 6, 7. Jude, 3. 20. Rom. 3. 30. 2 Cor. 4. 13. ⁱ Gal. 3. 27, 28. Mat. 28. 19. ^k Mal. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 8. 6. & 12. 6. Pl. 83. 18. Dan. 4. 34, 35. Rom. 11. 36.

manner, to the illustration of *that* subject. Let the well-chosen phrase which the Apostle uses here, teach them and all Christians to search more and more into this unfathomable abyss; as still sure to discover new wonders in the variety and fulness of its inexhaustible contents, beyond what they have known before, and to find new treasures in tracing again those already known.

This glorious theme is worthy of the contemplation of angels; and we are elsewhere told, that these celestial spirits *desire to look into it* (1 Pet. i. 12.) and to learn new displays of the divine attributes from the church. Let not our hearts then be cold to these sacred truths which are *our own* salvation, while they rejoice in them (principally, perhaps,) on the general principles of piety and benevolence.

Let our eyes then be frequently directed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our knees be frequently bowed before him, invoking him, under that amiable and delightful character, as the great *Father* of that one *family*, which in infinite mercy he is forming to himself—a *family*, consisting, not only of those who have been originally the inhabitants of heaven, who were born in his house, and have never offended him, but of many who have been, and many who are inhabitants of earth, once the children of the curse, and the heirs of death and destruction.

Let us all remember, it is now *the family of Christ*, our great elder Brother; who, though the Lord of heaven, disdain not to own that humble relation, while the angels are adoring him, as standing at the head of the society, and esteem it their honour to be related to him. Let us be more affected with the grace extended to us, and consider our relation to him as *a bond of union* among ourselves. While we are of this *family*, let not the different garbs that we wear, or the different apartments in which we are lodged, alienate our affections from each other; but let us often be thinking of that blessed day, when *the whole family* of saints and angels now above, and faithful believers now upon earth, shall meet in heaven; and let us, in the mean time, endeavour to behave as worthy members of this glorious society, and have its *common interests* at heart.

And from that eminently faithful and honourable branch of the family, the blessed Apostle, let us learn what to wish

for ourselves and our brethren—even that God, according to the riches of his grace, would strengthen us with might by his spirit in the inner man; that we may attain great degrees of vigour and confirmation in religion, by the vital and powerful operations of the Holy Spirit of God upon our hearts; that we may be strong to discharge every duty, to resist temptations, to conquer our enemies, to assist our brethren, and to glorify our Father and our Saviour. Let us earnestly desire, that Christ may not only now and then visit our hearts, but, by the habitual and lively exercises of faith, may even dwell in them; that we may thus be continually conversant with him, as our most honoured and beloved guest; and that love may take deep root in our hearts, and be solidly grounded there. Let us earnestly pray that, under Divine illuminations, we may be enabled to form more exalted and suitable conceptions than we have ever yet attained, of the breadth, and length, and depth and height, of this unfathomable, this inconceivable love of Christ, which surpasses the perfect knowledge even of saints in glory. And O that, by these contemplations, we may find ourselves daily filled with all the fulness of God, so that our hearts may even overflow with the abundant communication of his gifts and graces!

What shall we say in return for the knowledge that he has already given us, for the love which he has already wrought in our hearts, if we are so happy as to know the grace of God in truth? What! but that, believing his power to outdo all it has already wrought for us, yea, to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, we will still confide in him, and call upon him; and will humbly endeavour to bear our part *with the whole church*, in ascribing to our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, and our Father, glory throughout all ages, and even world without end. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle gives his beloved Ephesians an account of his sufferings for the truths which he had asserted. *For this cause*, because I declare the privileges to which the Gentiles, in common with the Jews, are admitted through the gospel, *I Paul am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles*; and those are honourable bonds which, in his service, are laid upon us, *if, or since, ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me*

all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us ¹ is given grace

according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, ^m When he ascended

¹ Rom. 12. 6. ¹ Cor. 12. 11. Ver. 8—14. Ch. 1. 3, 9. ^m Pf. 8. 18. Col. 2. 15.

to you-ward, as especially commissioned and sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles: and how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery of his gospel, as a common salvation for men of all nations, (as I wrote afore, in this Epistle, in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, and how fully and clearly he has acquainted me with his gracious designs,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, the Gentile world being left in almost utter ignorance; and those to whom the light of truth was revealed in types and prophecies, seeing but through a glass darkly, compared with the present clear dispensation of the gospel, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, since the ascension of Jesus into the heavens; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with his believing Israel, and of the same body, incorporated in one church, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, sharing in all the privileges of the gospel dispensation equally with the Jews. Whereof I was made a minister, by a divine call and ordination, not of men, nor by man, but immediately from Jesus Christ himself, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, appointing me to this office, and qualifying me for the discharge of it, by the effectual working of his power, enabling me for my work, and crowning it with success. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, so exceedingly lowly does the great Apostle speak of himself, and wants words sufficiently abasing to express the sense that he entertained of his own unworthiness of so high an honour; even to me, vile as I am, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; those treasures of grace and glory which reside in him for his faithful saints, which can never be fathomed, never be exhausted; a store that mocks computation, and in which we know neither where to begin nor where to end the wonderful account; and to make all men see, as far as my ministry should reach, what is the fellowship of the mystery, and how blessed is that communion of saints into which, by the gospel, they are admitted, even Gentiles as well as Jews, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, a secret lodged in his own Divine mind, who created all things by Jesus Christ, without whose co-efficient agency was not any thing made that was made. And the revelation of this mystery, which was so long concealed, is made known, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, that fresh matter might thus be afforded to the angelic host for their contemplation, wonder, and praise; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, who was ordained to be the great agent in redemption, as he had been in creation: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him — faith, of which he is both the great author and object, whereby we can now approach the throne of grace with humble confidence, regarding God as our father and friend, and admitted into the most endeared fellowship with him. Wherefore, considering these ineffable blessings and privileges, I desire that ye faint not at any

tribulations for you, or be disheartened or desponding at these sufferings, which are your glory, and should minister to you continual matter of rejoicing in the honour thus conferred on me, and in the confirmation given thereby to the gospel which you have received. Note, (1.) None can make gospel ministers but God only: they who run ungent, must return unblest. (2.) The grace of God should be the grand subject of our ministrations; for to preach this are we sent. (3.) If we know the power of the gospel, we shall not be ashamed of that cross, which, for the sake of it, we shall be called to bear. (4.) The greatest Christians have the most lowly thoughts of themselves. (5.) None can truly preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to others, who have not first experienced something of them in their own souls. (6.) They who by faith in a Redeemer behold a reconciled God, will delight to approach him, and to maintain constant communion with him.

2dly, The Apostle informed us what was the subject of his preaching, and he failed not to water the seed sown with his fervent and importunate prayers. For this cause, that you may not faint, and that the gospel may be made effectual to you, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, both angels and men, saints on earth, and saints in heaven, who, through their adored Saviour, have obtained a more excellent title, as children of God, than that in which the carnal Jews boasted, as children of Abraham. Now the apostle prays for them,

1. That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, out of the abundance of his grace, and for his great name's sake, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, to oppose all your spiritual foes, to resist every temptation, to bear up under all perfection, to discharge every duty and service for God's glory, and the good of immortal souls; and steadily and perseveringly to hold on your heavenly course, till your warfare shall end, and your victory be complete. Note, Spiritual blessings are the best of blessings, and most earnestly to be sought.

2. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith making your souls the place of his abode; blessing you with a sense of his nearness and special presence; and enabling you, by faith, to draw out of his fulness; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, fully persuaded of God's love in Christ towards you, experiencing the richest manifestations of it in your hearts, and cleaving to him with fixed attachment, as the tree that hath struck its roots deep into the earth, may be able to comprehend with all saints, to whom in bonds of fervent love you are united, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Its infinite fulness none, not even angels, can comprehend; but larger and more extensive views of this love than we have yet attained to, we cannot but desire—to behold its vast extent, as reaching to all nations and sinners of every degree; its duration towards the faithful saints of God, even to all eternity; the depths of wretchedness

up on high, he led ⁿ captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now, that he ascended, what is it but that he also ^o descended first into the lower

ⁿ Or a multitude of captives. Judg. 5. 12.

^o John, 3. 13, 31. & 6. 38. & 7. 29. & 13. 3. & 16. 28. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Pl. 139. 15. Mat. 12. 40.

wretchedness in which we lay, and of sufferings to which, for our sakes, the Son of God incarnate submitted; and the transcendent heights of glory to which he himself is now exalted, and to which he has engaged to bring his faithful people, that they may reign with him for ever and ever.

3. *That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God*; completely made partakers of a divine nature, and, to the utmost capacity of your souls, may be enriched with all that light, grace, peace, joy, and holiness, which God, as your covenant God, has promised to his dearest and most faithful children in this world; and may you come to the eternal enjoyment of him in a better, to dwell in God, and God in you, for ever.

4. He concludes with a doxology. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*, who counts nothing too great or too good to bestow on his saints, and hath already given us the most encouraging experience of his power and grace; *unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end*; eternal blessings, praise, and adoration, be rendered unto him for this astonishing redemption; and let every member of the church, in heaven or on earth, with holy rapture and joy, cry, *Amen!*

CHAP. IV.

THE great discoveries in the foregoing part of this Epistle, to which the Apostle has given the appellation of *the mystery of God*, and of *Christ*, were set forth by him, not merely for the purpose of weaning the Ephesians from the vain mysteries of their idol gods, and of fixing them in the belief and profession of the gospel; but also for giving them an elevation of sentiment and affection, becoming those whose minds were enlightened with the knowledge of the mystery of God's will; and, at the same time, for leading them to a right behaviour, in all the relations of life wherein they were placed. Accordingly, as a proper introduction to the excellent summary of morality contained in the remaining chapters of this Epistle, the Apostle, from the consideration of the great privileges which the Ephesians enjoyed in the Christian fellowship, earnestly besought them to live in a manner worthy of the *calling* by which they were called, that is, of the honourable appellations bestowed on them by God since their admission into the Christian fellowship, ver. 1.—And, first of all, he commanded them to assist each other when in distress, from a principle of love, ver. 2.—and to live together in peace, because the disciples of Christ, the initiated into the mystery of God, make one body, or society, are animated by one Spirit, have one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and worship one God, the supreme Ruler of the Universe, ver. 3—6. Whereas, none of the heathen fellowships had any such bonds of union, leading them to consult each other's interests.—Next, he informed

them, that, for the right instruction and government of this well-united body, or fellowship, various supernatural gifts were distributed to the different members thereof, by Christ, the head of the fellowship, ver. 7.—and, from Psalm lxxviii. proved that the power of distributing these gifts to men was conferred on Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, as a reward of his obedience unto death, ver. 8.—and in confutation of the unbelieving Jews, who affirmed that the Christ was never to die, John, xii. 34. he told them that the expression in the Psalm, *He ascended on high*, implies Messiah's descent from heaven, and death on earth, ver. 9, 10.—Then he observed, that, by these gifts, some were fitted to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ver. 11.—in order that they might build the church of Christ, ver. 12.—Wherefore, the fellowship of the mystery of God was a much more excellent and better regulated society than any of the heathen fellowships, on account of the extraordinary endowments possessed by its directors and teachers, among many other reasons. And he informs them, that the faithful, persevering members of this fellowship should arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, in such entire harmony and agreement as will cement them together in still dearer bonds; and, getting above that infant state in which so many of them now are, they shall grow up to the maturity of a perfect man, even to the full measure of the spiritual stature, so as to reach what may be called the standard of the fulness of Christ, attaining to those eminent degrees of grace and goodness which will fit them to become his stated residence, and to be filled with the most glorious tokens of his presence and favour, ver. 13, 14.—In the mean time, he commanded all the teachers of the Christian fellowship to speak to the people the true doctrines of the gospel from love, that they might adhere closely to Christ, the head of the body, or fellowship, by holding the doctrines delivered to them by those teachers whom he had inspired and authorized, ver. 15, 16.

Having thus explained the bonds by which the members of the fellowship of the mystery of God are united, the principles by which they are actuated, the supernatural gifts with which many of them were endowed, especially those who were appointed to instruct and direct the whole body, and the duty of those who were appointed by Christ instructors, St. Paul, as an inspired apostle, or *mytagogue* of the mystery of God, in the name, and by the authority of Christ, the head of the fellowship, commanded the Ephesians to relinquish the vices which prevailed among the idolatrous Gentiles, and, in particular, no longer to walk, as the other Gentiles walked, in the foolishness of their minds. For, although the Gentiles boasted that their mysteries were the only true wisdom, and the only effectual support of the soul, they were, in reality, foolishness, and led those who were guided by them into every kind of sensuality, ver. 17—19.—contrary both to the doctrine

parts of the earth ?

10 He that descended is the same also that

ascended up far above all heavens, that he might * fill all things.)

* Acts, 1. 11. & 2. 33. 2 Cor. 13. 24. Ch. 1. 20, 23. Col. 1. 19. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Heb. 4. 14. & 17. 26. & 8. 1. & 9. 12, 24.

* Or fulfil.

doctrine and to the example of Christ, ver. 20, 21.—Likewise, he commanded them to lay aside all their former lusts, and to be renewed in their mind after the image of God, which, he told them, consists in righteousness and true holiness; an idea of God very different from the representations of the heathen Gods given in the mysteries, ver. 22—24.—and particularly to abstain from lying, anger, theft, and obscene discourse, because these vices grieved the Spirit of God, who had sealed, or marked them as persons belonging to the fellowship and mystical body of Christ, ver. 25—30.—Then a second time he prohibited anger in all its modes, and enjoined kindness and forgiveness of injuries, after the example of Christ their head, ver. 31, 32.

Ver. 1. *I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, &c.*] St. Paul having concluded the special part of his Epistle with the foregoing chapter, comes in this, as his manner is, to practical exhortations. He begins with *unity, love, and concord*, which he presses upon them from a consideration which he makes use of in more of his Epistles than one; that is, their being all members of one and the same body, whereof Christ is the head. Some have observed of this Epistle, and of the others which were written by St. Paul in his imprisonment, (namely, those to the *Colossians* and *Philippians*, to *Philemon*, and the second to *Timothy*) that they are more especially remarkable for their divine unction, and discover a peculiar favour of the things of God; by which it may be seen, that, while his sufferings did abound, his consolations also did much more abound. It is, however, manifest, that this Epistle,—as it sets forth, in the preceding part, the gracious design of God in the gospel dispensation; and represents the benefits and privileges which belong to all the faithful in Christ Jesus, as well Gentiles as Jews,—is cast into a strain of thanksgivings and prayers, and written, as it were, all in a rapture, in a sublime and elevated style, flowing from a mind transported with the consideration of the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God in the work of redemption, and of the amazing love displayed in Christ towards the Gentile world. The remaining part of it is no less admirable, for the engaging manner in which he improves what he had before delivered, urging the duties which became their character with the greatest tenderness, in expressions full of love and endearment; adding the strongest arguments to enforce them, and making mention of his bonds to recommend the exhortations which he offered to them. The *prisoner of the Lord* signifies for the sake, or on account of the Lord.

Ver. 2. *With long-suffering,*] As there is no copulative between *meekness* and *long-suffering*, it seems most natural to connect the latter with the following clause, *with long-suffering forbearing one another in love*. And if the exhortation be thus rendered, it will prevent the solecism, which would arise from connecting the word *forbearing* (ἀνεχομενοι) with ἡμᾶς, *ye*, in the verse before; to which we should be led by our translation.

Ver. 6. *One God and Father of all, &c.*] Though God may be stiled the Father of all things universally, who is above, through, and in them all, as he created and upholds them, and has supreme dominion over them: and as in him we live, and move, and have our being; yet *the father of all, &c.* in this place, evidently means something more peculiar and distinguishing, with special relation to all his believing people, and to his gracious operation in them: for this best suits the design of the Apostle's argument, and is most agreeable to all the other instances of union before recited, which, undoubtedly, have a particular and restrained reference to *the church*; and the *all* here intended, admits of a very easy construction, as answering to the *one body*, ver. 4. and to *you all* in the close of this verse. But when the Father of all true believers is said to be *one God*, this no more excludes the Son and Spirit from being God, together with the Father, than Christ's being called *one Lord*, and the Holy Ghost *one Spirit*, ver. 4, 5. excludes the Father from being *Lord* and *Spirit* together with them: and what is here said of *God the Father* as *over* or *above* all, (ἐπι πάντων), is said of Christ, as *over* all, (ἐπι πάντων) *God blessed for ever* (Rom. ix. 5.) and as the Father is *through* and *in* all believers, and all things that refer to them as believers; so it is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all things are *by* him, or *through* him, (δι' ἃ τὰ πάντα), 1 Cor. viii. 6. and that he *fills* all in all, Eph. i. 23. and believers are the *temples of the Holy Ghost*, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, (1 Cor. iii. 16.) Therefore *one God and Father of all* may be considered either as a *personal character*, and so the meaning is, that there is but one God the Father, in distinction from one God the Son and Spirit; or as an *essential character*, and so there is but one true God, inclusive of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom we are devoted in our baptism, ver. 5. in opposition to all false Gods; and with just the same propriety it may be said, there is *one God the Son*, and *one God the Spirit*, to distinguish them *personally* from the Father, and *essentially* from all false gods.

Ver. 7. *Is given grace, &c.*] That their *differing* in some respects, though united in so many, might not be urged as a plea for self-esteem, or neglect of others who wanted such advantages, the Apostle insists upon it, that all is communicated to us in the way of free gift and unmerited liberality.

Ver. 9, 10. (*Now, that he ascended, &c.*) St. Paul's argumentation in these two verses is skilfully adapted to the main design of his Epistle. The convert Gentiles were attacked by the unconverted Jews, who were declared enemies to the thoughts of a Messiah who should die. St. Paul, to enervate that objection, proves, by a passage out of the Psalms, (ver. 8.) that he must die, and be buried. Besides the unbelieving Jews, several of those who were converted to the gospel, or at least professed to be so, attacked the Gentile converts on the other side, persuading them that they could not be admitted to be the people of God in the kingdom of the Messiah, nor receive any advantage

11 ⁹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 ⁷ For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the ⁸ body of Christ:

13 ¹ Till we all come ^{*} in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the [†] stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we *henceforth* be no more ^u children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with

every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But ^x [‡] speaking the truth in love, ⁷ may grow up into him in all things, which is ^z the head, *even* Christ:

16 ^a From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

⁹ 1 Cor. 12. 28—30. Rom. 12. 6—8. 1 Cor. 9. 1. 2. & 4. 9. Acts, 11. 27. 1 Cor. xiv. Acts, 21. 8. 2 Tim. 4. 5. 1 Tim. 5. 17. ⁷ Rom. 12. 5.
⁷ 1 Cor. 12. 7, 27. & 14. 25. Col. 1. 20. 1 Tim. 4. 16. ⁸ Ch. 1. 23. & 5. 23, 30. Col. 1. 24. & 2. 19. Ver. 16. 1 Cor. 12. 12. ⁸ 1 Cor. 1. 10.
 John, 10. 16. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Phil. 3. 9—14. Ch. 2. 15. Col. 1. 12, 23. & 2. 10. ^{*} Or into the unity. [†] Or age. ^u If. 28. 9.
 1 Cor. 14. 20. Rom. 16. 8. Heb. 13. 9. 2 Tim. 3. 6. 2 Thes. 2. 9, 10. Acts, 20. 29, 30. Mat. 23. 5, 11, 24 & 11. 7. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 2. &
 11. 13. Col. 2. 4, 7. Tit. 1. 10. 2 Pet. 3. 3. Jude, 4. ^x Zech. 8. 16. 2 Cor. 4. 2. Gal. 2. 5, 11. & 3. 1. & 4. 16. & 5. 6. [‡] Or being
sincere. 1 John, 3. 18. ^z Col. 1. 10, 18. & 2. 10, 19. 2 Pet. 3. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. not as 2 Tim. 2. 18. & 3. 7. & 4. 4. Tit. 1. 14. ^z Ch. 1.
 10, 13, 22. & 2. 21. & 5. 23. Col. 1. 18. ^a Col. 2. 19. Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 27. Ch. 2. 21, 22. Zech. 10. 12.

advantage by him, unless they were circumcised, and put themselves wholly under the Jewish constitution. He had said a great deal in the first three chapters to deliver them from this perplexity; but yet takes occasion here to offer them a new argument, by telling them, that Christ, the same Jesus that died, and was laid in his grave, was exalted to the right-hand of God, above all the heavens, in the highest state of dignity and power; that he himself being filled bodily with the fulness of God, believers, who were all his members, might receive immediately, from him their head, a fulness of gifts and graces, upon no other terms but as they were his members.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the saints,*] *For the fitting out holy persons,—to the edifying, &c.* Blackwall.

Ver. 13. *Till we all come, &c.*] “Till all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, that are faithful members of this mystical body of Christ (including those who now do, and hereafter shall perseveringly believe, in successive generations to the end of the world,) shall meet, and be cemented together in an entire agreement about the doctrines of faith, in the sweetest harmony, union, and oneness, by means of the same faith in Christ; and of a clear, affectionate, and filial knowledge, and (*ἰσχυρισμός*) approving acknowledgment of the eternal Son of God, as a divine person, and the only Lord and Saviour; and so, by gradually improving in gifts and graces, shall, at length, arrive at a state of complete manhood in spiritual understanding, vigour, strength, and attainments of every valuable kind, even unto the full proportion of that mature age and spiritual stature in Christ, which he designs for his faithful people, and which is acquired by derivation from his mediatorial fulness, and makes up the fulness of his faithful mystical body under him, as its head, with regard to the perfection of its graces, comfort, and holiness.” Dr. Heylin renders this verse as follows: *Till we all become united in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, grow up to maturity, and arrive at the*

measure of perfection to which the fulness that is in Christ will raise. See ch. iii. 19.

Ver. 14. *By the sleight of men, &c.*] The word *κωδέια*, rendered *sleight*, properly signifies the artifice of those infamous gamblers, who know how to *cog the dice*. The next clause may be rendered, *and subtilty in every method of deceit*. Some render it, *and cunning craftiness, as to the art, or method of deceit*. The word rendered *cunning craftiness*, implies all the various degrees of subtilty, dissimulation, and insidiousness, by which men endeavour to deceive. It is to be hoped that no reader, and particularly none of the *sacred order*, will fail to observe what the Apostle so plainly asserts in the beginning of the next verse; namely, that it was the design of the ministry to preserve peace and charity, as well as orthodoxy, regularity, and discipline in the church;—*to maintain the truth in love.*

Ver. 16. *From whom the whole body*] The sum of this whole figurative discourse is, that all real Christians, as members of one body, whereof Christ is the head, should, each in his proper sphere, according to the gifts bestowed upon him, labour with concern, good-will, and zeal, for the benefit and increase of the whole, till it be grown up to that fulness which is to complete it in Christ Jesus. This sense of the exhortation carries with it a strong insinuation (especially if we take in the rest of the admonitions to the end of the Epistle) that the Mosaic observances were no part of the business or character of a Christian, but were wholly to be declined and laid aside by the subjects of Christ's kingdom. The Apostle considers Christ in the allusion before us, not only as the head, but likewise as the heart of the church; whence the blood and spirits are derived, through many canals and tubes which communicate together, to the extreme parts, where the increase and nourishment of those parts which want it is produced. Bengelius translates this verse as follows: *In whom the whole frame, joined together and compacted, receives increase*

17 ^b This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ^c ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 ^d Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the ^e blindness of their heart :

19 ^f Who being past feeling have given

themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 ^g But ye have not so learned Christ ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, ^h as the truth is in Jesus :

22 That ye ⁱ put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ;

^b See 1 Cor. 10. 12. Acts, 20. 21. Rom. 1. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 12. ^c Ch. 5. 3—8. Col. 3. 5—14. Rom. 13. 11—14. & 1. 21—32. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 15—21. Ch. 2. 2, 3. 12. 1 Pet. 4. 3. Ver. 18, 16. ^d Acts, 26. 18. Rom. 1. 21. Gal. 4. 8. Ch. 2. 12. & 5. 8. 1 Thes. 4. 5. Col. 1. 13. ^e Or *hardness*. ^f 1 Tim. 4. 2. Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28. 1 Pet. 4. 3. ^g Rom. vi. & 7. 4, 6. & 8. 2, 13. & 13. 14. 1 Cor. 1. 20 & 6. 19, 20. Ch. 5. 1—8. Col. 3. 1—14. Tit. 2. 10—14. & 3. 8. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Mat. 5—viii. Luke, vi. ^h 2 Cor. 1. 20. Mat. 26. 28. John, 1. 14, 16. & 14. 6. Ch. 1. 13. ⁱ Col. 2. 11. & 3. 8, 9. Rom. 6. 6. & 7. 14—24. & 8. 13. Ch. 2. 2, 3. Mat. 15. 19. Heb. 12. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 1. & 4. 3. Gal. 5. 17—20. Ezek. 18. 31.

increase of the body from every connection of supply, by an operation proportionate to each part, or member, for the building up of itself in love.

Ver. 17.] From this verse to verse 24. the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians wholly to forsake the former conversation, in which they had passed their lives, while they were Gentiles; and to take up that which became them, and was proper to them, now that they were Christians. The vanity of mind spoken of in this verse, appears from Rom. i. 21. &c. to be, the apostatizing of the Gentiles from the true God to idolatry; and, in consequence thereof, to all that profligate way of living which followed thereupon, and is described in the place referred to by St. Paul.

Ver. 18. *Being alienated from the life of God.*] The life of God seems to signify more than a life prescribed by God to his people, as some understand it. It intimates a life consisting in a righteous and holy imitation of his perfections, and a constant devotedness to his service; and perhaps it may also intimate its being originally derived from him; (see ver. 24.) they having been alienated in affection as well as in practice from the life of God—that noble principle of true religion, which is, indeed, the divine life in the soul, forming it to the service and imitation of him by whom it is implanted. Though the last clause of this verse may certainly refer to the Gentiles, in their unconverted state, yet it is equally true of the natural blindness of men universally, in their unregenerate state. If the words rendered *mind, understanding, and heart* are to be distinguished, the first may signify the mind in general, comprehending the understanding, or intellectual faculties; and the heart may imply the affections and passions, by the irregularity and obstinacy of which the understanding is often obscured, and led into false and irrational judgments.

Ver. 19. *With greediness.*] The word *πρωεξία*, rendered *greediness*, in its common acceptation, is, “The letting loose our desires to that which we have no right to by the law of justice.” But St. Paul, in some of his Epistles, uses it for “intemperate and exorbitant desires of carnal pleasures.” See ch. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. Thus, the Hebrew word which signifies *covet-*

ousness, the LXX. translate by the word *μισμῶς*, which denotes *pollution*; and in this sense the Apostle uses the word *πρωεξία* here; implying a transgression of the bounds, not only of virtue and decency, but even of natural appetite. See Rom. i. 27.

Ver. 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ;*] This may, perhaps, intimate, that there was a manner of learning Christ, which might seem more consistent with such irregularities; and may glance on some teachers, who called themselves Christians, and yet took very little care to inculcate practical religion.

Ver. 21. *If so be, &c.*] *Forasmuch as, or seeing ye have heard him, &c.* See ch. iii. 2. Beza, Gataker, and others, translate and connect this and the preceding verse as follows: *But it is not so with you; you have learned Christ; for ye have heard of him, &c.*

Ver. 22. *That ye put off, &c.*] The verbs *put off, be renewed, and put on*, in this and the following verses, are in the infinitive mood; which shews their connection with the preceding words, and that the sense is, “Ye have been instructed to put off the old man, to be renewed, to put on,” &c. As particular dispositions of mind are sometimes expressed by particular garments, when a man appears in them; so the whole of a good or bad character may be represented by a complete dress; yea, by the body in which he appears; and vice, alas! being too natural, and having the first possession, whereas goodness, if it ever succeeds at all, is supervenient and supernatural; the former may well be called *the old*, and the latter, *the new man*; which opposite characters may be seen clearly delineated in the following part of this, and in several other of St. Paul’s Epistles. Some have explained the *deceitful lusts* spoken of in this verse, of the lusts into which they were led by the artifices of the heathen priests, who represented them as not disagreeable to their established deities; or by the sophistry of their philosophers, who found out so many fallacious excuses for the grossest vices; but it is a more important sense to understand these *deceitful lusts* of those which generally prevail in the world; which can lead to no rational solid happiness, but delude by vain appearances, and fallacious hopes, always ending in shame and disappointment.

23 Andⁱ be renewed in the spirit of your mind ;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and * true holiness.

25 Wherefore^k putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour : for we are^l members one of another.

26^m Be ye angry, and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath :

27ⁿ Neither give place to the devil.

28^o Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him^p labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have^q to give to him that needeth.

29^r Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good[†] to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

ⁱ Rom. 12. 2. & 6. 4. 2 Cor. 4. 16. & 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. Ch. 2. 10, 15. Col. 3. 10. * Or holiness of truth. ^k Zech. 8. 16. If. 58. 7. Col. 3. 9. Rev. 21. 8, 27. ^l Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 10. 17. & 12. 12, 27. Ch. 5. 30. 1 Pet. 2. 5. ^m Pl. 4. 4. & 37. 8. Mark, 3. 5. Prov. 19. 11. Eccl. 7. 9. & 11. 10. Deut. 24. 15. & 21. 23. Prov. 14. 29. & 29. 8. James, 1. 19. Rom. 12. 19—21. ⁿ James, 4. 17. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. ^o Exod. 20. 15, 17. Ch. 5. 5. ^p Acts, 20. 34, 35. 1 Thes. 4. 1. 2 Thes. 3. 8, 11, 12. ^q Or to distribute. ^r Ch. 5. 3, 4. Col. 4. 6. 1 Cor. 15. 37. Mat. 12. 36. Eccl. 10. 12. Prov. 10. 32. Pl. 45. 2. Luke, 4. 4, 22. 1 Cor. 14. 5, 19. Col. 3. 16. 1 Thes. 5. 11. Ch. 5. 19. [†] Or to edify profitably.

Ver. 23. And be renewed in the Spirit of your mind ;] This saving knowledge of Christ excites and binds you, not only to mortify your corruptions, but also to abound in all grace and holiness, that you may press after a still further renovation, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, in the inmost powers of the soul, which is of a spiritual nature, but is naturally all over depraved by the fall ; and particularly after a growing renovation in your understanding, that superior and leading faculty, as well as in your will and affections, which are, or ought to be, under its conduct." As the Apostle supposed that these Ephesians had *learned Christ*, and *been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus*, ver. 20, 21, he could not but consider them, in the judgment of charity, as already regenerated, or born again ; and therefore *renewing in the spirit of their mind*, must relate, not to the first grand work of the Spirit in their conversion, but to a progressiveness in those holy principles and dispositions that were wrought in them by heart-changing grace.

Ver. 24. True holiness.] As this stands in a beautiful contrast to *deceitful lusts*, ver. 22, we may, with great propriety, retain our version ; though archbishop Tillotson would translate the clause, *the holiness of truth*, which is perfectly agreeable to the original—by *truth* understanding the gospel, and so explaining it of evangelical holiness, in opposition to such mere moral virtues as might be found in a heathen.

Ver. 25.] After the general exhortation, in the foregoing verses, to renounce the old course of life which they led when they were heathens, and to become perfectly new men, conformed to the holy rules of the gospel,—St. Paul descends to particulars ; dehorting them from many vices, and pressing them to the practice of several important virtues. The words *τὸ ψεῦδος*, rendered *lying*, might be rendered more properly *every lie* ; and as *lying* is so opposite to that sincerity which becomes a Christian, what is said against it may be best taken in the most extensive sense. The Apostle might possibly allude to the doctrine of those heathen moralists, who thought that lying might, in many cases, be justified : as well as to those, who, in order to conciliate the esteem of the Jews and Gentiles, did not confine themselves to the rigid truth.

Ver. 26. Be ye angry, and sin not :] It is evident that this is not a *command* to be angry, but a *concession* only, with a caution to beware of sinning in it. Comp. Isai. viii. 9, 10. Nahum, iii. 14, 15. Some would read this interrogatively,—*Are ye angry, yet sin not ?* The next is a Hebrew expression,—used to intimate that a thing necessary to be done, should not be prolonged or delayed ;—and an allusion to Deut. xxi. 23. to this effect : " If the punishments inflicted by the law were not to be extended to the going down of the sun, much less should private resentments be extended longer." This was agreeable to the practice of the *Pythagoreans*, who used always, if the members of their sect had any difference with each other, to give tokens of reconciliation before the sun went down.

Ver. 28. Let him that stole steal no more :] *Stealing* properly signifies *private thefts*, or *frauds*, in distinction from public or violent robbery : and as in many of the Gentile nations theft was thought to be no sin ; so, perhaps, some of the Ephesian converts had not perfectly divested themselves of their own immoral notions concerning it, and must, of course, have been sometimes under strong temptations to the commission of it. Instead of, *working with his hands the thing which is good*, Markland would read, *working with his hands, that he may have good things to give to him, &c.*

Ver. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed, &c.] This primarily refers to obscene talk ; which is, with great propriety, called *corrupt*, or *putrid*, as the word *σαρξ* signifies, in direct opposition to that which is *seasoned with salt* ; and is recommended, Colos. iv. 6. as tending to preserve from such putrefaction and rottenness. *But that which is good, &c.* some read, *But if any thing be good to needful edification* : as if it were intimated, " that if any useful thought arise, or an occasion may be fitly taken to graft an edifying remark on any thing which passes in conversation, there should be a readiness to improve it ; that so every one may furnish out his quota, without unprofitable or disagreeable chaffs of silence, or the temptation of having recourse to any thing that is ill, to prevent them ; which, unfortunately, is but too often the case."

Ver.

30 And ' grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ' sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 ' Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away

from you, with all malice:

32 And " be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

¹ If. 7. 13. & 63. 10. Ezek. 16. 43. Mich. 2. 7. Acts, 7. 57. ² Rom. 8. 16, 23. ² Cor. 1. 2 2. & 5. 5. Ch. 1. 13, 14. Luke, 21. 28. Rom. 12. 11. ³ Col. 3. 8. ¹ Pe. 2. 1. Tit. 3. 3. Pf. 37. 8. James, 4. 11. & 1. 21. ⁴ 2 Cor. 2. 10. Phil. 2. 1. Col. 3. 12, 13. Mat. 6. 14. & 18. 35. Mark, 11. 25. ¹ Pe. 3. 8, 9. & 4. 8. Rom. 12. 10, 13, 19—21.

Ver. 30. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed.] The original is emphatical, *Grieve not that Holy Spirit of God;—whereby ye are sealed;* that is to say, "As all the things, against which I have been cautioning you, are directly contrary to the holy nature, will, and operations, gifts and graces of the good Spirit of God; and as he, speaking after the manner of men, is grieved at them; as a friend uses to be at the disagreeable and ungrateful behaviour of one with whom he dwells, and has treated with kindness and favour,—have a care left, by indulging any of them, you offend and rebel against him, as Israel did of old (Isaiah, lxiii. 10.), and provoke him to withdraw his gracious presence, who is not only infinitely pure and holy in himself, but loves holiness, and is the author and worker of its first beginnings, and of all its increases in you; by which, in some remarkable manifestations and impressions of light and grace, consequent to your first believing, (see ch. i. 13), you are evidently sealed as with his own image, and are thereby distinguished for his own, with assuring tokens of salvation; and have the pledge and earnest of it in yourselves, for your present comfort, until, if faithful unto death, you be possessed of the heavenly inheritance." The term of *sealing* seems to be a metaphor, taken from merchants putting some *seal*, or *mark*, upon their commodities, by which they may be known to be theirs. One of the ancients somewhere says, *Delicata res est Spiritus Dei*;—"There is, if we may so express it, a certain delicacy in the Spirit of God, which should engage those who desire his influences, solicitously to guard against every approach to what might be offensive to him."

Ver. 31. Let all bitterness, &c. be put away] "Do not passionately resent every trifle, nor bitterly inveigh, with all the licentiousness and keenness of satire, against those who have greatly injured you;—for these things are most contrary to the nature of God, the genius of Christianity, and the character of its great Founder." Such is the meaning of this verse, if we suppose each word to have a different idea annexed to it; but if they are only synonymous terms, the Apostle's design in amassing them together might be to shew, that he would have them to be upon their guard against all the malevolent passions, and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce. The like remark may be applied to many other passages of scripture, and particularly to those where all kinds of lewdness are forbidden in such a variety of phrase and language.

*Inferences.—*If divine grace has taught us to know the

hope of our calling, it will surely add great weight to the pathetic exhortations of this faithful servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, to walk worthy of it. It will teach us that *humility, meekness, and long-suffering*, of which our divine Saviour was so glorious an example;—an example, which should powerfully engage us to the exercise of that mutual *forbearance*, so well suiting those whom he has brought into so happy a state.

To incite us hereto, let us reflect—"Do we not all, indeed, belong to *one body*, however called by different denominations? Have we not all (so far as we are truly called *Christians*) received *one Spirit*? Is there not *one hope of our common calling*—even that of dwelling together, in one and the same blissful world, with God, and with each other? Have we not *one Lord*, even Jesus Christ, to whom we all equally profess subjection; who has taught us *one faith*: who has instituted *one baptism*, and who has introduced and consecrated us to *one God and Father of all*?—And what then are the considerations which should prevail so far as to *divide us*, when compared with such bonds of union as these?"

Let us all, therefore, in the name of this God, *who is over all*, who operates *through all*, and *in us all*; in the name of this *one Saviour*, and *one Spirit*,—awful and endearing names! into which we were all baptized; let us charge it upon our own souls, that we not only do nothing, through a factious and uncharitable temper to *divide his church*, but that we study what we can to *heal its breaches*, and to promote its growth and edification. And let us pray that God would guide and prosper our endeavours for that purpose, and preserve our hearts in such a situation and temper, that we may stand continually willing to give up every temporal interest which may interfere with such a design; yea, and even to make our own blood, if such were the will of God, the cement of those wounds, with which a body thus intimately united to Christ has so long been bleeding almost to death.

Were we actually to give such a proof of our regard to it, what would it be in comparison of the infinite condescension and love of that Saviour, who for us descended to these lower regions of the earth, and dwelt for a while among the dead; and then triumphantly rising and ascending on high, led those enemies, who held us in captivity, themselves captive, as at his chariot-wheels; and having received gifts from men, scattered them down with such royal munificence, that he might fit his ministers for the offices to which he had called them.

These his ministers we are taught by this chapter to regard as the special gifts of his love to the church; and as such, let us adore him for them; not only for apostles, prophets,

CHAP. V.

After general exhortations to love, to flee fornication and all uncleanness, not to converse with the wicked, to walk warily, and to be filled with the Spirit; he descendeth to the particular duties: how wives ought to obey their husbands, and husbands ought to love their wives, even as Christ his church.

[Anno Domini 62.]

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

^a Ch. 4. 32. Mat. 5. 45, 48. Luke, 6. 36. 1 John, 3. 1—3. 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. ^b John, 13. 34. & 15. 12. 1 Thess. 4. 9. 1 John, 3. 11, 16, 18, 23. & 4. 20, 21. ^c Gal. 2. 20. & 1. 4. Tit. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 32. 1 Cor. 5. 7. Heb. 8. 3. & 7. 27. & 9. 14, 26. & 10. 10, 12. 1 Pet. 3. 18. Rev. 1. 5. & 5. 9. with Gen. 8. 21. Lev. 1. 9. & 3. 16. Num. 28. 6, 13, 27. & 29. 2, 8, 36. ^d Col. 3. 5. 1 Thess. 4. 3—8. Mark, 7. 21, 22. Rom. 1. 24. & 6. 10. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 15. 2 Cor. 12. 21. Gal. 5. 17—21, 24—26. Ch. 4. 19. with Exod. 23. 13. 1 Cor. 5. 1. Ch. 4. 29. Col. 3. 8. Mat. 12. 35, 36. Rom. 1. 28. with Col. 1. 12. & 4. 2. Ver. 20. Ch. 4.

prophets, and evangelists, but also for pastors and teachers. And let us earnestly pray, that through the continued influences of that Spirit, which he has sent down from on high, holy men may, in every succeeding age, be so perfectly and completely fitted for the work of the ministry, that the body of Christ may be edified; that by this means we may all come to that union, to that strength, to that full maturity, to which, by calling us into the fellowship of the gospel, he intended to raise us.

In the mean time, while we are advancing towards it, may we rise above that childish weakness which would make us the sport of every wind of doctrine, and a prey to every artifice of designing men. Let us ever maintain a due regard to the united interests of truth and love, that our union with Christ may be secured, and our growth in him more happily and abundantly advanced.

And since we have learned Christ, since the light of his blessed gospel has been imparted to us, and we are no longer numbered among the heathen nations, let us not abandon ourselves to those irregularities of temper and life, for which even their ignorance will not be a sufficient excuse, since the light even of their obscure dispensation taught them to condemn and to abhor such courses.

There are deceitful lusts, according to which the old man is corrupt; let us be always on our guard against them, and labour after such a renovation as becomes our profession; and, in order to its being effectual, let us be earnestly solicitous to obtain it *in the spirit of our mind*; that we may shew its influence upon us, not merely by ceasing to do evil, but by learning, to the utmost of our power, to do good. Thus, let it be our care to put on the new man, to be partakers of a new and holy nature, and to be brought to the whole of that temper in all its branches, by which we shall resemble the blessed God, the bright Original of universal righteousness and holiness, and the great Model of perfection.

In consequence of this remembering our relation to each other, let us speak the truth from our hearts; and upon all occasions let us treat others with the same candour and integrity with which we would ourselves desire to be treated. If anger or indignation rise, let it be only on just occasions, and in due proportion; and let us take care that it *rest not in our bosoms*; lest, by indulging it, we give place to the devil, and become like that malignant spirit.—Let us be upright in our

2 And ^b walk in love, as Christ also ^c hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

3 But ^d fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh faints;

4 ^e Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but

dealings; and, conscientiously avoiding the iniquitous practice of defrauding others, let generous and charitable sentiments always possess us; nor let those whose circumstances in life may constrain them to maintain themselves by their own manual labour, think that they may violate the strictest rules of honesty, or are dispensed with from all obligations to relieve others more necessitous than themselves. Whenever we engage in conversation, let us avoid every thing that may have the remotest tendency to corrupt discourse; and let us study what may improve and edify the minds of our hearers; embracing every opportunity of suggesting any thing that is good, and that may tend to minister grace, or to promote the more abundant exercise of it in the minds of those in whom it is already implanted.

Thus will the Spirit of God, that sacred Agent of Divine inspiration and sanctification, be *delighted*, instead of being *grieved*, as he so frequently is by the vain and foolish discourses of those who would *be thought* his temples. For his influences let us look, to dispose us to every good word and work, and seasonably to remind us of these plain but weighty admonitions, which, alas, are so little remembered by the generality of those who call themselves Christians, that one would imagine they had scarce ever read them.

The words in ver. 28. make up a complete sense, without depending on what goes before, or what follows after. They contain a confirmation and explication of the eighth commandment. For what the Apostle enjoins concerning labour and working with our hands, is no more than a necessary consequence of the command, "*Thou shalt not steal.*" For since all men are equal sharers in the wants and necessities of life, and the things which should supply these wants are unequally divided, so that some have more than enough, and some much less, it follows, that the necessities of the one must be supplied from the abundance of the other. Steal you must not, or give perhaps you will not. The only sure way then by which you can come at the things you want, is by purchase or exchange; and the only thing that a poor man can exchange is the work and labour of his hands; and therefore it follows, as a consequence of the law, that since you must not steal, you must work, and purchase, by your labour and industry, the things necessary for your support and subsistence. In all that rich men can do, they want the assistance of the poor; they

rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger,

nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the king-

1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19—21. Col. 3. 5, 6. Heb. 13. 4. Rev. 21. 8, 9, 27. & 22. 15. Mat. 6. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 17. If. 3. 11.

they cannot minister to themselves either in the wants, the conveniences, or the pleasures of life: so that the poor man has as many ways to support himself as the rich man has wants and desires; for the wants and desires of the rich must be served by the labours of the poor. But then the rich man has often very wicked desires, and often delights in sensual pleasures; and though to serve the rich be the poor man's maintenance, yet in these cases the poor man must not serve him; and therefore the Apostle adds that he must labour, *working with his hands the thing which is good*. His poverty obliges him to serve man, and therefore he must work with his hands; and right reason, as well as religion, obliges him to serve God, and therefore he must work only *the thing which is good*. Labour is the business and employment of the poor; it is the work which God has given them to do; and therefore a man ought not to be satisfied with working merely as far as the wants of nature oblige him, and spending the rest of his time idly and wantonly: for if God has enabled him to gain more by his labour than his own wants, and the conveniences of life necessary to his station require, he then becomes a debtor to such duties as are incumbent on all to whom God has dispensed his gifts liberally. He must consider that he owes tribute to his Maker for the health that he enjoys; that there are others who want limbs to labour, or strength and understanding to arrive at the knowledge of any art or mystery, whereby to maintain themselves; and to these he is a debtor, out of the abundance of his strength, and health, and knowledge with which God has blessed him; and therefore he is obliged to labour, "working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle addresses to them,

1. A general exhortation to walk worthy of their high vocation. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, suffering now for my fidelity to his gospel, beseech you, by every endearing argument, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, adorning, by your conversation, the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

2. He particularly exhorts them, (1.) to behave *with all lowliness and meekness*, in humble thoughts of themselves, and the mildest deportment towards others, *with long-suffering* passing by offences, and overlooking the infirmities of their brethren, *forbearing one another in love*, influenced by this divine principle, and patient towards all men. *Note*, True love, humility unfeigned, and approved meekness, are the most striking lineaments of the Christian's character. (2.) In this manner *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, sweetly cemented together in holy fellowship, and the whole church being in perfect peace, no jarring discord should disturb the happy union.

3. He suggests the strongest motives to the practice which he recommends. *There is one body*, of which we are all members; and *one Spirit*, which actuates the whole;

and therefore we cannot, if this be the case, but have the tenderest concern for, and closest union with, each other; *even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*, looking for the same inheritance in glory, and expecting to spend a blessed eternity in your Father's house above. There is *one Lord*, the great Head of the church, and to whom they all owe duty and allegiance; *one faith*, the same gospel, and to be apprehended in the same way; *one baptism*, the sacramental right of admission into the kingdom of grace, wherein we are solemnly dedicated to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: *one God and Father of all*, who stands in this endeared relation in a peculiar sense to all that are his children by faith in Jesus Christ; *who is above all*, exalted above all blessing and praise; and *through all*, dispensing his mighty influences through the whole mystical body; and *in you all*, making your hearts his temple;—and therefore, being connected by ties so many and so engaging, we should be most closely united together in love, and appear as actuated by one soul.

4. The different gifts and graces bestowed on the members of the same body, far from producing any variance, should cement them the nearer, as they are given for the benefit of the whole. *But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gifts of Christ*, who gives to each member his respective office and endowment, and dispenses severally, to all true believers, the grace suited to their place and station. *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive*, triumphant over all his foes, having spoiled principalities and powers, and led Satan, sin, death, and hell, as vanquished enemies, bound to his chariot-wheels; and *gave gifts unto men*, the richest and most amazing gifts of his Spirit. *Now that he ascended in this glorious manner, what is it that is herein intimated to us, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth*, humbling himself to take the human nature into personal union with himself, and then to lie down in the grave, making atonement for our sins. *He that descended is the same divine Person, the Son of God, who ascended up far above all heavens to the state of the most transcendent dignity, enthroned in majesty on high, that he might fill all things*, and abundantly dispense to every member of his church the gifts and graces needful for them. *And he gave some apostles*, to fill the highest stations in his church; and *some prophets*, to foretel by inspiration future events, and to expound the prophetic word; and *some evangelists*, who were generally employed in preaching the word; and *some pastors and teachers*, to take care of particular churches, and minister unto them in holy things: all which appointments to these several offices are designed for the *perfecting of the saints*, *καταρτισμὸν*, to join them in firm union together, and carry on the work of grace begun in them to its perfection; *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, by means of the same blessed gospel*, and by happy experience of the power and grace of the same adored Jesus, unto a perfect man, growing up to higher spiritual

dom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain

words: for ^b because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of ^{*} diso-

^{*} Jer. 29. 8. Mt. 24. 4. Gal. 6. 7. Col. 2. 4, 8. 2 Thes. 2. 3. James, 1. 16. 1 John, 4. 1. ^b Rom. 1. 18. & 2. 8, 9. Il. 3. 11. Pl. 75. 8. & 9. 17. Ch. 2. 2, 3. Col. 3. 6. Rev. 21. 8. 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. Gal. 6. 7, 8. ^{*} Or unbelief.

tual attainments, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, when we shall bear his image complete: That we henceforth be no more children, weak in faith, and knowledge, and every grace, and consequently liable to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and, by fair pretences, seduce the simple and unwary into their pernicious heresies and destructive ways; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; which growth in grace the blessed gospel, through the power of Jesus, tends immediately to promote: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together as members to the living head, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, by that divine energy that is communicated from the life-giving Spirit of the Lord, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Note, Truth from the heart should ever be spoken among Christians, and with that love which may gain it a more welcome reception.

2dly. Having recommended to them close union, he proceeds to inculcate purity of heart and life.

1. He warns them against the practices of the unconverted heathen. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, entreating, and solemnly in his name enjoining it upon you as members of his undefiled body, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in their sinful, idolatrous, sensual courses, in the vanity of their mind, acting after the dictates of their vain and corrupted hearts; having the understanding darkened in all spiritual matters; alienated from the life of God, estranged from him who is the fountain of life, and averse to all his holy ways, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, rejecting every means of instruction, wilfully perverse and obstinate against the notices of his will, and resisting the convictions of their own consciences, not choosing to retain God with all their knowledge; who being past feeling, their hearts hardened in sin, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, abandoning themselves to every vile affliction without restraint, and pursuing their guilty pleasures with insatiable desire.

2. For otherwise was the lesson which the gospel had taught them. But ye have not so learned Christ, since ye have known his grace; you have been directed to a different spirit and conduct; if so be, or since that ye have heard him speaking in his word to your hearts, and have been taught by him, through the illumination and powerful energy of his Spirit, as the truth is in Jesus, even that pure unadulterated gospel which Jesus taught by his own ministry, and exemplified in his temper and conversation, whose bright example his living members delight to imitate: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, that body of sin which was born with you: which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,—lusts which promise much gratification in the indulgence, but fatally deceive the soul into endless perdition: and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind yet more and more in know-

lege, grace, and holiness; and that ye put on the new man, be made partakers of a divine nature, and in spirit, temper, and conduct, quite changed from your former selves, as if you had been really different persons; which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, and by his own power. Wherefore, as those who are influenced by another spirit, beware of those sins to which you were formerly addicted; particularly,

(1.) Putting away lying in every instance, speak every man truth with his neighbour, without deceit or prevarication, paying the strictest regard to your word at all times, and in all circumstances, and preferring the endurance of the greatest evils to the suggestion of the least falsehood: for we are members one of another, and therefore bound to use all simplicity and fidelity in our conversation with each other. Note, An habitual liar is infallibly a child of wrath. All Christ's members desire ever to speak the truth from their heart.

(2.) Be ye angry, and sin not; for all anger is not in its own nature evil: but as we are so prone to exceed in our resentments, even where there is just cause for indignation, we must check the rising displeasure, and repress its workings: therefore, whatever cause is given for it, let not the sun go down upon your wrath; but hasten to calm any tumult which may have arisen, that it fix not in hatred, or rankle into malice and revenge: neither give place to the devil, who ever seeks to irritate the irascible nature which is in us, and to blow our passions into a flame. Note, There is scarcely a more besetting sin than anger, nor any against which we need be more habitually on our guard.

(3.) Let him that stole, steal no more, utterly abhorring all such iniquitous practices; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth; and not only be saved from the temptation to dishonesty, whereunto idleness is the most direct road, but also be enabled by his honest industry to afford a pittance from his gains for the relief of the necessitous.

(4.) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, nothing lewd, profane, opprobrious, light, which in its most distant tendency can lead to evil; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers, and serve to promote their spiritual and eternal benefit. Note, Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a Christian spirit will appear in a readiness to introduce and maintain such conversation as is profitable and edifying.

(5.) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, by these or any such like evils; lest you provoke him to withdraw his blessed influences from you; whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption, that glorious day when the faithful saints of God shall be delivered from the burdens of the flesh, or when they shall rise again in glory, to appear for ever in the presence of God. Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from us! (See the Annotations.)

(6.) Let all bitterness, all rancour of spirit and acrimony

bedience.

7¹ Be not ye therefore partakers with them. now are ye light in the Lord: walk as chil-

¹ Ver. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Ps. 1. 1. & 50. 18. Prov. 9. 6. & 13. 20.
18. Rom. 1. 21. & 13. 12. 1 Cor. 12. 2. 2 Cor. 4. 6. & 3. 18. Gal. 4. 8, 9. Ch. 4. 18. & 2. 12. & 1. 18. Phil. 2. 1. Col. 1. 13. 1 Thes. 1. 9. & 4. 5. & 5. 4, 5.

² 1 Cor. 6. 11. Ch. 2. 11, 12. Tit. 3. 3, 5, 7. If. 9. 2. Act. 26.
1 Luke, 16. 8. John, 8. 12. & 12. 35, 36, 46. Tit. 2. 11-14. 2 John, 8. see ch. 4. 1. If. 60. 1. & 2. 5.

in discourse; and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, the fruits of a mind inflamed with passion and rage; be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, gentle, courteous, affectionate; tender-hearted, sympathizing, and full of pity towards the afflicted and the tempted; forgiving one another every provocation and injury, however great or aggravated, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, freely and fully. Note, A sense how much we are ourselves indebted to the pardoning love of God, will engage us to exercise the like forgiveness to our brethren,

CHAP. V.

BECAUSE the characters and actions of the heathen deities, according to the notions which were entertained of them, were vicious in the extreme, and had a most pernicious influence in corrupting the manners of their worshippers,—the Apostle, in different parts of this epistle, but in a more solemn manner in the beginning of this chapter, held up to the Ephesians the character of God, or Christ, as truly venerable and worthy of imitation. For he commanded the Ephesians, now become the children of God through faith, chap. i. 5. to be imitators of God, as his beloved children, and to walk in love to one another, after the example of Christ, the Head of their fellowship, who had loved them so exceedingly, as to give himself a sacrifice for their sins, ver. 1, 2.—Next he ordered them to avoid fornication; a vice which the heathens practised without restraint; and to abstain from obscene discourse; because the persons guilty of these impurities are so odious to God, that they shall have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, ver. 3, 4, 5.—And because the heathens pretended to justify these practices by the example of their false deities, the Apostle cautioned the Ephesians against being deceived with false speeches; and told them, that God had declared his disapprobation of such enormities by his judgments brought on the nations who were guilty of them, ver. 6.—The Ephesian Christians therefore were not to be partakers with the heathens in their vices, ver. 7.—Because though formerly such of them as were initiated into the mysteries thought themselves enlightened, they were really in darkness as to matters of religion, spiritual experience, and morality. Whereas being truly enlightened by the gospel, it became them to walk as persons rightly instructed, ver. 8.—Withal, to lead them to a proper behaviour, he pointed out to them the graces and virtues, which are the fruits of minds well enlightened, ver. 9, 10.—and forbade them to join in any of the fellowships of the heathen mysteries, which he justly termed *the unfruitful works of darkness*, because they produced no fruit to those who continued in them, except eternal death, ver. 11.—He added, that the things done in the mysteries during the darkness of the night, were so abominable, that it was an offence against modesty so much as to mention them, ver. 12.—Besides, the gospel expressly condemns these base actions; by which its excellent nature is clearly manifested,

ver. 13, 14.—Next, he ordered the Ephesian brethren to walk carefully and accurately, as Christian converts, in correspondence to their new light and obligations, and according to the rule of the word; as persons under the eye of God and men, of enemies as well as friends, ver. 15. and to redeem time and opportunity, particularly because the days in which they lived were days of great immorality, ignorance, and profaneness, and days of trouble, danger, and persecution for the sake of Christ, ver. 16. He then charged them to take heed that they did not act an inconsiderate foolish part, as in the days of their ignorance and unregeneracy; nor needlessly expose themselves to the malice and fury of their enemies; but endeavour to consider attentively the mind and will of the Lord Christ, in respect to the prudence of their behaviour, ver. 17. And to prevent their running into the abominable practices against which he had been already cautioning them, he warns them against so free an use of intoxicating liquors as would cloud the mind and disorder the faculties of the soul; and commands them to get their souls filled with the holy influences and consolations of the Divine spirit, ver. 18. speaking among themselves, by singing forth the praises of God, in all the variety of them, by joining their voices in proper tunes to utter poetic compositions, which are to be sung, he adds, in a spiritual manner, for spiritual ends; and their united praises, *with the voice together* (If. lii. 8.), should be with the sweetest harmony and delight in their own hearts, by their ascending with their voices to the Lord Jesus, and shewing forth his glory, ver. 19. And to conclude this subject, the Apostle requires that the work of praise should run through their whole lives; and that, on all occasions, they should express their thankfulness for all things to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him; and this thanksgiving should be rendered to him through our Lord Jesus Christ, as our only Mediator, and the purchaser of all blessings, on whose account they are bestowed upon us, ver. 20.

With respect to relative duties, the Apostle, in a general manner, exhorted the Ephesians to be subject to one another in the fear of God: that is, to perform to each other, from a principle of piety, all the duties of social life, according to their different stations, and according to the relations and subordinations in which they stood to each other, ver. 21.—Then proceeding to particulars, in the natural order of these relations, he began with the duties of wives and husbands, which he illustrated by the example of Christ and the church; and on that occasion explained a very deep mystery relating to Christ and the church, couched in the formation of Eve, and in her marriage with Adam, ver. 22—30.

Ver. 1. *Be ye therefore, &c.*] “ Since therefore God is so exceedingly good and merciful in the exercise of his pardoning grace toward you (ch. iv. 32.), let this excite you to be (μιμηται) imitators of him, in exercising all kindness

children of light :

9 (For^m the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) ;

10ⁿ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

^m Gal. 5. 22, 23. Ezek. 36. 27. ⁿ Rom. 12. 2. Phil. 1. 10. 1 Thes. 5. 21. ^o Pf. 1. 1. & 26. 4. 5. Prov. 4. 14, 15. & 23. 21, 25. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 11. 2 Cor. 6. 14. 2 Thes. 3. 6. Rev. 18. 4. ^p Rom. 6. 21. & 13. 12. Gal. 6. 8. Acts, 3. 17. John, 3. 20. 1 Thes. 5. 7. Heb. 9. 14. Ch. 4. 22. 1 Cor. 10. 20. 1 Tim. 5. 22. ^q Lev. 19. 17. Mat. 13. 15. Luke, 17. 3. 1 Tim. 5. 20. ^r Rom. 1. 24—27. 1 Pet. 4. 3.

“ kindness and forgiveness one towards another, as becomes children of his own likeness, begotten and adopted by him, beloved of him, and loving him, and delighting to resemble him, especially in those amiable graces, and to approve yourselves to him who is Love, and is so much pleased with this part of his image, that he who dwells in love, dwells in God, (1 John iv. 16.)” This verse, as is intimated by the particle *therefore*, is an inference from the last verse of the preceding chapter, which might have been continued to the end of the second verse of this chapter, where the Apostle shuts up his argument then in hand.

Ver. 2. An offering, &c.] Some think that the words *προσφορά* and *θυσία* are used in reference to the *peace-offering* and the *sin-offering*, as the truth of both is in the sacrifice of Christ, which appeased God, and obtains the blessings consequent upon his favour. The words possibly are here used in conjunction, to express the completeness of the sacrifice:—*of a sweet-smelling savour*, was, in scripture phrase, such a sacrifice as God accepted and was pleased with. See Gen. viii. 21.

Ver. 3. And all uncleanness or covetousness,] Or, *any kind of uncleanness or insatiable desire.* *Insatiable desire* is certainly a literal rendering of the Greek word *πλεονεξία*, which plainly signifies the *desire of having more* of any thing, whatever it be. And though the word is commonly used for *covetousness*, or an intemperate love of riches; yet it is here to be understood of the letting loose of the desires in a carnal way. The words in connection abundantly prove this to be the sense; for what indecency or unbecomingness is it among Christians to name *covetousness*. The word *πλεονεξία*, therefore, must here signify the title of sins that are not fit to be named among Christians. The whole verse may be thus paraphrased: “ But, as you expect favour from God, you must make it your care to maintain a due consistency of character, avoiding not only all malignant passions, but every kind and degree of impurity and licentiousness, and therefore let not fornication, nor any kind of uncleanness, or insatiable desire of sensual gratifications, or of the means of procuring them, be so much as named, or heard of among you; but abstain from these evils, and whatever might lead to them, as it becometh saints, who are conscious of the sanctity of their name and profession, and dread the thoughts of debasing it.”

Ver. 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, &c.] “ Nor let there be among you any shameful practices in secret, the very naming of which would put a modest person to the blush; nor any light, wanton, or obscene ways of talking, bantering, or joking, which are so far from

11 And^o have no fellowship with the^r unfruitful works of darkness, but^a rather reprove them.

12 For^r it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

“ innocent pleasantries, that they are not only unprofitable and vain, but very offensive to God, and insufferable to a chaste ear, and are too great an incentive to impure thoughts and actions: ye therefore ought to have nothing to do with them; but, on the contrary, should accustom yourselves to employ your tongues in speaking well of God, with grateful acknowledgments of his goodness, and in thankfulness and praise for his wondrous works of providence and grace, which would be honourable to him, and improving to your company, as well as to yourselves; and would be a happy means of guarding you against impure language, and all the fore-mentioned abominable iniquities, which have the most pernicious consequence.”

Ver. 5. Nor covetous man, who is an idolater,] In whatever sense *covetousness* is used, it may be called *idolatry*; as it is setting up *something else*, and, be it what it will, something comparatively *very base and contemptible*, and pursuing it, as if it were something that could be to us, as in the place of God, a supreme happiness.

Ver. 6. Let no man deceive you, &c.] “ Let no man then, in this respect, amuse and deceive you with vain words and sophistical arguments, by which it is well known that many, and especially some who call themselves philosophers, attempt to vindicate some of these things, or at least to extenuate the evil of them; for I am divinely commissioned to assure you, that, on account of these things, and such as these, the wrath of God cometh even on the Gentiles, those children of disobedience and infidelity: now, if heathens are punished for them, much less can we suppose that professing Christians, who have so much greater advantages for purity and virtue in all its branches, and are under such peculiar engagements to cultivate it, shall escape with impunity in these shameful practices.”

Ver. 8. Ye were sometimes darkness,] St. Paul, to express the great darkness in which the Gentiles were, calls them *darkness* itself. The kingdom of Satan over the Gentile world was a *kingdom of darkness*. See ch. vi. 12. And so, on the other hand, we find Jesus is pronounced by Simeon a *light to lighten the Gentiles*, Luke ii. 32. The parenthesis in ver. 9. serves to give us the literal sense of all that is here required by the Apostle in this *allegorical discourse* of light. See Col. i. 12, 13.

Ver. 11. With the unfruitful works of darkness,] It is well known that the word *ἀνεργίες* in Greek, and the word *inutilis* in Latin, are sometimes used to express not only *unprofitable*, but *mischievous* things; and this is undoubtedly the meaning of the word here. See Rom. i. 28.

Ver. 12. It is a shame even to speak, &c.] Nothing could

13 But all things that are * reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, ' Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye ^a walk circumspectly,

not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, ^x because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore ^y be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 And ^z be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ^a filled with the Spirit;

* Or discovered. ^a John, 3. 20, 21. Heb. 4. 13. ^b If. 26. 19. & 60. 1. Rom. 13. 11, 12. & 6. 4, 5. 1 Cor. 15. 34. John, 5. 25. Ch. 2. 5. Co. 3. 1. 1 Thes. 5. 6. ^c Col. 4. 5. Mat. 10. 16. Eccl. 2. 13. Exod. 23. 13. John, 12. 35, 36. Phil. 2. 12. & 1. 27. Gal. 6. 17. ^d Eccl. 11. 2. & 12. 1. Ch. 6. 13. Gal. 1. 4. Amos, 5. 13. Pf. 49. 5. 2 Tim. 3. 1-5. John, 9. 4. ^e Ver. 15. Rom. 12. 2. 1 Cor. 11. 20. 1 Thes. 4. 3. ^f Luke, st. 34. Prov. 20. 1. & 23. 29. If. 5. 11, 12, 22. ^g John, 20. 22. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. Ezk. 7. 27. Col. 1. 9. Acts, 11. 24. Phil. 1. 9, 11.

be more impure and abominable than some of the religious nocturnal mysteries of the heathens, to which the Apostle seems here in the primary sense to refer. Bishop Warburton, agreeably to his system, asserts, that if the lower sort of mysteries among them were first intended by the magistrates to impress the minds of the people with a belief and sense of future rewards and punishments, and the higher sort of them to instruct persons of more reflection and penetration than the rest, in the knowledge of the true God, and the other great principles of natural religion, they were long before the Apostle's time greatly corrupted, and degraded to the most detestable purposes; so that some persons in public characters, by no means remarkable for the purity of their own morals, thought it absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the most scandalous and profligate disorders, to prohibit the celebration of them. Monsieur Saurin has observed a sarcasm in this clause seldom attended to; as if it were insinuated here, "They are called *απογεντα*, things not to be spoken of: true, says the Apostle, they are properly so! things not too sacred, but too infamous to be mentioned." See his Sermons, tom. viii. p. 198. and Div. Leg. b. ii. sect. 4.

Ver. 13. But all things that are reprov'd] See John iii. 20. The Apostle's argument here, to keep the Ephesian converts from being misled by those who would persuade them that the Gentile impurities were indifferent actions, —is to shew them that they were now better enlightened: to which purpose, ver. 5. he tells them, that no such person as there described, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God, or of Christ. This he tells them, ver. 8, &c. was *Light*, which they had received from the gospel; of which before their conversion they knew nothing, but were in perfect darkness and ignorance of it: but now they were better instructed, and saw the difference; which was a sign of life; and therefore were bound in duty to follow that light, which they had received from Christ, who had raised them from among the Gentiles, (who were so far dead, as to be wholly insensible of the evil course and state they were in,) and had given them light and a prospect into a future state, and a way to attain everlasting happiness.

Ver. 14. Wherefore he saith, Awake, &c.] "Wherefore, when God is speaking in the prophecies of the Old Testament, of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the light which they should have by Christ, he says in effect, to those who are yet in darkness, though not exactly in these words, *Awake, thou that sleepest*, &c. And this particularly is the most natural import of those well-

known words in Isaiah, ch. lx. 1. *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* That is to say, the *Messiah*, represented by the *glory of the Lord*, shines in his church; shines upon the souls of believers; in consequence of which, they arise as from the dead, and shake off their deep sleep; they rejoice in the light; they walk in it, and reflect it all around them; so that many others are awakened, and transformed by it. See on If. lx. 1.

Ver. 16. Redeeming the time,] The word *ἐξγοραζ' υμεις*, redeeming, has a peculiar force, and implies, as the French word *racheter*, and the English word *redeem*, also does,—the recovery and purchasing again what has been lost. "Endeavour to recover, as far as possible, the time which has been unhappily lost and thrown away in the enormities of your heathen life, by diligently making use of what remains, and studying to improve it to the best and most valuable purposes; for which you should be careful to embrace the present opportunity, because the days we live in are evil; in which we are on every side surrounded with persecutions and perils, and God only knows how soon our liberty or our life may be taken away." Dr. Heylin reads *Improving the time*; and he observes from Tully, that every hour has its proper duty; *nullum tempus vacare officio potest*. When we discharge that duty, we improve, that is, make the best of our time. The motive added is, *because the days are evil*: the frequent disasters which happen to us furnish materials for the exercise of holiness and virtue, which is the true improvement of time.

Ver. 17. Wherefore be ye not unwise,] See ver. 10. The Christian prudence is, upon all occasions, to consider what is the will of God. Our duty varies with our circumstances; and it is a main point of wisdom to discern what are the duties which correspond to our present circumstances.

Ver. 18. Be not drunk with wine,] It is highly probable that here may be a particular reference to those dissolute ceremonies called the *Bacchanalia*, which were celebrated by the heathens in honour of their god of wine. While these rites continued, men and women made it a point of religion to intoxicate themselves, and ran about the streets, fields, and vineyards, singing and shouting in a wild and tumultuous manner: in opposition to these extravagant vociferations, the use of devout psalmody is with great propriety recommended. Plato tells us, that there was hardly a sober person to be found in the whole Attican territories, during the continuance of these detestable solemnities.

19^b Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20^c Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21^d Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22^e Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

24 Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25^m Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

^b Acts, 16. 25. 1 Cor. 14. 26. Col. 3. 16. James, 5. 13.

17. 1 Thes. 5. 18. Heb. 13. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 9. & 4. 11.

3. 16. Col. 3. 18. 1 Cor. 14. 34. Tit. 2. 5. 1 Tim. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 5, 6.

35. 1 Pet. 1. 7. 1 Tim. 2. 23. ^c See ch. 1. 22. & 4. 15. Col. 1. 18. & 2. 19.

1. 10. Rev. 5. 9. ^d See ch. 1. 23. & 2. 16. & 3. 6. & 4. 12, 15. Ver. 30—32. Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 27. Col. 1. 18, 1, 24. 1 Col. 3.

20. Tit. 2. 9. ^e Ver. 28. Col. 3. 19. 1 Pet. 3. 7. Prov. 5. 19. Gen. 2. 24.

1 Pet. 3. 18. Tit. 2. 14. Rev. 5. 9.

^f Job, 1. 21. Ps. 34. 1. & c. ciii—cv. cviii. cxxvi. cxlv—cl. If. 63. 7. Col. 3.

^g Phil. 2. 3. Rom. 10. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Prov. 1. 7. Pf. 111. 10. ^h Gen.

ⁱ 1 Cor. 11. 7. Ch. 6. 5. ^j 1 Cor. 11. 3, 7. & 14.

^k Ver. 25—27. Mat. 1. 21. If. 45. 17, 22. 1 Thes.

^l Ver. 30—32. Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 27. Col. 1. 18, 1, 24. 1 Col. 3.

^m Acts, 20. 23. Mat. 10. 28. Gal. 1. 4. & 2. 20. Ver. 2.

nities. St. Paul dehorts the Ephesians from the too free use of wine, because *therein is excess*. The word is *δωρία*, which may either signify *luxury* or *dissoluteness*; implying that drinking is no friend to continency and chastity, but gives up the reins to lust and uncleanness,—the vice that he had been warning them against: or it may signify *intemperance* and *disorder*; opposite to that sober and prudent demeanour advised in *redeeming the time*. Wine is so frequently the cause hereof, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of Providence in giving it, that the enormity is represented by a strong and beautiful figure as contained in the very liquor.

Ver. 19. *Singing and making melody in your heart*] “Your hearts and affections corresponding with what is uttered by your mouths; without which no external melody, be it ever so exact and harmonious, can be pleasing to the Lord.”

Ver. 20. *Giving thanks always, &c.*] “Giving thanks to God for all the favours that he has bestowed upon you, and even for your afflictions, as occasions offer for the trial, the illustration, and improvement of your holiness and virtue.” The words rendered *for all things*, are translated by some *for all persons*; and then the meaning will be, “Consider yourselves as appointed to return to God the tribute of praise due from the whole human race, and address your daily thanksgivings to him, for those blessings which he is continually showering down on your fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures in general.”

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another*] Though this verse, in grammatical construction, be joined to the foregoing discourse, yet it ought to be looked upon as introductory to what follows, and to be a general rule given to the Ephesians, to submit to those duties which the several relations that they stood in to one another required. After this general exhortation to the discharge of the relative duties, the Apostle proceeds to the particular consideration of the several relations of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; which he might rather choose to insist on, as some were ready to imagine that Christian converts were released from any further obligation to those who still continued in a state of heathenism. The Apostle

therefore presses it upon them to shew a due regard to relative duties, in whatever station they were placed; and to remember that Christian privileges by no means excused them from the duties resulting from natural and civil relations of life, but rather enforced the obligations they were under to observe them: and if these duties were incumbent upon Christians towards relations of all kinds, even though they bore the character of unbelievers, much more were they engaged to practise them toward such, as were related to them, not only by the ties of nature or of civil institution, but also by the more endearing bonds of grace. See 1 Cor. vii. 10—24. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves, &c.*] The Apostle's discourse on particular relative duties, is in the natural order in which the relations themselves commenced in the world, which was first between husband and wife; next, between parents and children; and, lastly, between masters and servants. The Apostle accordingly begins with the duties of the first of these relations in this chapter, and goes on to those of parents and children in the next; and he keeps the same order in his exhortations to all these in his epistle to the Colossians, ch. iii. 18, &c. and iv. 1. But it may be farther observed, that, in both these epistles he first insists on the duties of the inferior, and then on those of the superior relatives in every instance of them. And St. Peter proceeds in the same order, when he speaks of the duties of wives and husbands, 1 Pet. iii. 1—7. The reasons of this may probably be, because the duties of wives, children, and servants, are most difficult in themselves, and most apt to be objected against, and not so readily attended to, and complied with; and because, if these relatives faithfully perform the duties on their part, it will lay a more endearing obligation upon husbands, parents, and masters, to treat their wives, children, and servants, with love and tenderness, and would leave them utterly inexcusable, were they to be wanting in their duty toward them. Hence St. Peter, in the place just referred to, exhorts believing wives to win their husbands by a becoming spirit and conversation.

Ver. 23. *The husband is the head of the wife,*] It is from the head that the body receives both health and life: St. Paul here pronounces this of Christ, as the head of the church;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the

Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

^o John, 17. 19, 17. & 15. 3. & 3. 5. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 5. & 2. 14. Heb. 9. 14. & 10. 22. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 23. & 3. 21. 1 John, 5. 6. ^p Deut. 23. 10. Song, 4. 7. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Ch. 4. 7. & 1. 4. Col. 1. 22. Tit. 2. 14. Jude, 24. Rev. 21. 27. Col. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 30. ^q See ver. 31. 33. Gen. 2. 23, 24. Mat. 19. 5. ^r Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 6. 15. & 12. 12, 27. Ch. 1. 23. & 4. 16. Col. 1. 18. & 2. 10, 19. Ch. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 30. John, 1. 16. & 17. 22. with Gen. 2. 13. ^s Gen. 2. 24. Mat. 19. 5. Mark, 10. 7. 1 Cor. 6. 16. ^t Ps. xiv. Song, i—viii. K. 5. 54. & 62. 4, 5. Mat. 22. 1—13. Hof. 2. 19, 20. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Rev. 19. 7. 8. & 21. 3. ^u Ver. 28. 29, 31. Col. 3. 19. 1 Pet. 2. 7. Prov. 5. 19. ^v Esther, 1. 20. 1 Pet. 3. 2, 5, 6. See ver. 22. 24.

church; that by the parallel which he makes use of to represent the relation between husband and wife, he may both shew the wife the reasonableness of her subjection to her husband, and the duty incumbent on the husband to cherish and preserve his wife; as we see that he pursues it in the following verses.

Ver. 26. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it, &c.*] “That he might take away the power and pollution of sin from all its members, and infuse a principle of true holiness into them, and so consecrate them to God by the sanctification of his Spirit, as (*Καθάρσεις*) having purged them from the guilt of sin, by his atoning blood (see Heb. i. 3. and ix. 14, 22.); which effects of his blood and spirit are signified by the cleansing quality of water (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.): and he, in the greatness of his love, communicates these blessings by means of the gospel preached to them, and received and applied by faith, for the cleansing of them from all sin by his blood (1 John, 1. 7.), and renewing them by the Holy Ghost (Tit. iii. 5).”

Ver. 27. *That he might present it to himself*] The Alexandrian and other copies read, *That he himself might present to himself the church, glorious, without spot, &c.* The Apostle, to recommend to husbands love and tenderness toward their wives, in imitation of Christ's affection to the church, shews, that whereas other brides take care to embellish and fit off their persons, in order to recommend themselves to their bridegrooms, Christ himself, at the expence of his own pains and blood, purifies and prepares for himself his spouse (his faithful saints), that he might present it to himself without spot or wrinkle. How bright an idea does this verse give us of the grand plan and design of Christianity;—to bring all the millions of the faithful to such a state of perfect virtue and glory, that when the penetrating eye of Christ, their great and holy Bridegroom, shall survey them, there shall not be one spot, or wrinkle, or any thing like it, in the least to impair their beauty, or offend his sight! Where is such a scheme of thought to be found in the world, but in the New Testament, and those who have been taught by it?

Ver. 28. *So ought men*] *So also, or answerably to this, ought*

men; or, on the other hand, taking the matter in a different but correspondent view.

Ver. 30, 31. *For we are members, &c.*] The Apostle had here two things in view; the one was, to press men to love their wives, by the example of Christ's love to his church; and the force of the argument lay in this, that a man and his wife were one flesh, as Christ and his church were one; but this latter being a truth of the greater consequence of the two, he was as intent on settling it upon their minds, though it were but an incident, as the other, which was the argument he was upon: and therefore having said, ver. 29. that every one nourisheth and cherisheth his own flesh, as Christ doth the church, it was natural to subjoin the reason; viz. because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: this proposition he took as much care to have believed, as that it was the duty of husbands to love their wives; and when he had asserted this doctrine of Christ and his church being one, in the words of Adam concerning Eve, Gen. ii. 23. (which he, in his concise way of expressing himself, understands both of the wife, and of the church), he goes on with the words in Gen. ii. 24. which make their being one flesh a reason why a man was more strictly to be united to his wife, than to his parents, or any other relations. Instead of, *For this cause*, ver. 31. some would render the Greek, *Answerably thereto, or on the other hand.* See Matth. xix. 4—7. and ver. 28.

Ver. 32. *This is a great mystery:*] It is plain by the foregoing verses, and by the application of the words in Gen. ii. 23. to Christ and the church, that the apostles understood several passages in the Old Testament in reference to Christ and the gospel, which were not understood in their evangelical or spiritual sense, till, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, the apostles so explained and revealed it. This is that which St. Paul here calls *mystery*: he who is desirous to have a true notion of this matter, should carefully read 1 Cor. ii. where the Apostle very particularly explains it. Dr. Doddridge paraphrases the verse thus: “This is indeed a great mystery, which was long unknown, and now it is in some measure discovered, is a matter of much admiration: but you will easily perceive that in

CHAP. VI.

The duty of children towards their parents, and of servants towards their masters. Our life is a warfare, not only against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual enemies. The complete armour of a Christian, and how it ought to be used: Tyebicus is commended.

[Anno Domini 62.]

CHILDREN, ^a obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

^a Col. 3. 20. Prov. 23. 22. & 1. 8. & 6. 20. Gen. 22. 9. & 37. 13. 1 Kings, 2. 20. ^b Exod. 20. 12. Deut. 5. 16. & 27. 16. Jer. 55. 18. Ezek. 21. 7. 15. Mat. 15. 4. Mark, 7. 10. ^c Col. 3. 21. Gen. 18. 19. Deut. 4. 9. & 6, 7, 20. & 11. 19. Pf. 78. 4-7. Prov. 4. 1-13. & 29. 18. & 22. 6, 15. & 29. 17. & 13. 4. ^d Col. 3. 22. 1 Tim. 6. 1. Tit. 2. 9. 1 Pet. 2. 18.

“saying this, *I speak* not of the union between a man and his wife, but of that betwixt *Christ and the church*. For, that the Son of God should unite himself to a society of mortal men, and regard them as making a part of himself, on account of the intimacy with which they are joined to him in a community of spirit and of interest, can never be sufficiently admired.” This sublime doctrine which had been long concealed, and cannot now be fully comprehended, may, with the greatest propriety be called a *mystery*, in every sense of the word.

Inferences.—With what cheerfulness should the dear children of God imitate their Heavenly Father! And what an affecting and engaging motive to brotherly love is the dying love of Christ, who offered up himself as an atoning and acceptable sacrifice for us! But how utterly unworthy the Christian’s character, privileges, and obligations, is it to give way to any sin, especially such shameful ones as Heathens and unconverted sinners are infamous for! Neither covetousness, which is constructive idolatry; nor any sort of unchastity or impurity; nor any works of darkness, should ever be found upon, or countenanced by those who profess themselves to be saints: for whatever vain deceivers may suggest to the contrary, such things are abominable, and exclude the practicers of them from the Saviour’s kingdom of grace and glory, and bring divine wrath upon their heads. What a visible change in conversation is to be expected from those who are awakened into light and life by the powerful voice of Christ! They should walk as children of the light, under the influence of the Spirit, unto all goodness, righteousness, and truth; their words and actions should carry such reproof to workers of iniquity, as shews that they have no fellowship with them in their evil deeds, but that they approve of those things which are acceptable to God their Saviour. How watchful and careful ought they to be in their walk! They should be very circumspect to shun temptation, sin, and danger, and to redeem time for the best purposes, especially in evil days; and should behave wisely in an upright way, and not like ignorant and foolish people, who neither consider what they are doing, nor whither they are going. How pure and sublime are the joys that arise from being filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit! There is no danger of excess in these, as there is in the use of wine; they dispose us for singing the praises of God with harmonious voices,

2 ^b Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ^c ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 ^d Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear

and with the sweetest melody in our hearts; and make us thankful to him, through Jesus Christ, in every circumstance of things. But how concerned should we be to fill up all the relations of life with the duties of them, from a principle of holy reverence and fear of God! Husbands and wives should not trifle with, but conscientiously attend to the respective duties that result from their union with each other as one flesh. And O! how happy would the marriage-state be, if both relatives, in their places, would study to please one another! Conjugal love would keep all right between them, and secure the duties on both sides. How intimate and endearing is the relation and affection of Christ to his church! He is full of tender love and care towards his faithful saints, to take away the guilt, power, and defilement of their sins, by his blood and spirit, and by means of his word; and, at length, to present them to himself, arrayed in glory, like a spouse fit for such an illustrious husband to delight in, as having no spot or blemish of any kind upon them. How constraining ought his love to them to be, to engage their most dutiful submission to him! And what a sweet influence should these considerations have upon every religious husband to love his wife as himself, and upon every religious wife to reverence her husband!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Love is the divine principle through which alone the practice of all holiness can be produced. This therefore,

1. The Apostle inculcates. *Be ye followers of God as dear children*, acting according to this high relation, and in your spirit and temper resembling your heavenly Father; and walk in love, which is his brightest attribute, and renders you most like the blessed Redeemer; as Christ also hath loved us, with a love so free and so surpassing great; and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, to make atonement for our sins, and to reconcile us to God by his own blood, his sacrifice being infinitely meritorious and acceptable. Note, (1.) Love is the characteristic mark of a child of God, and a disciple of Jesus. (2.) The sacrifice of the Lamb of God is fully efficacious: God is well pleased in the oblation of his Son; and all who draw near in faith through him are sure of acceptance.

2. He warns them against all manner of uncleanness. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, the lawless*

and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of

1 Chron. 29. 17. Pl. 25. 21. Mat. 6. 22. Acts, 24. 16. 2 Cor. 1. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 16. Ver. 6. 7. Gal. 1. 10.

less desires of fleshly concupiscence, *let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints*, but avoided with the utmost detestation, and never once so much as mentioned; *neither filthiness*, in gesture, habit, or discourse; *nor foolish talking*, in secret innuendoes, or vain, light, or unprofitable conversation; *nor jesting*, to excite laughter in others, and admiration of our own carnal wit; *which are not convenient, but utterly unbecoming a Christian's profession*, who should rather be employed in giving of thanks, and use his tongue as an instrument to set forth the glory of God.

3. He enforces his exhortation by the most weighty arguments:

[1.] These sins must necessarily exclude us from heaven, and lay us under the eternal wrath of God. *For this ye know*, according to the unchangeable word of God, *that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, whose heart is the sty of lewd desires, or who is inordinately eager after gain, and consequently is an idolater, loving and serving the creature more than the Creator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God*, but must be for ever excluded from the divine favour. *Let no man deceive you with vain words*, as if these sins were not so dangerous; and with some soft names of *human infirmity, or venial transgressions*, endeavour to satisfy your consciences, and embolden you to hope for impunity: *for know assuredly, because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience and unbelief, who, despising God's warnings, perish eternally under the deluge of his fiery wrath. Be not ye therefore partakers with them*, by communion with them, or connivance at them, lest you become involved in their punishment. *Note*, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We should often consider it, that we might tremble, and avoid the most distant approaches of evil, which has consequences so dreadfully dangerous.

[2.] What God has done for us, should engage us to be faithful to him. *For ye were sometimes darkness*, and in this wretched state were blindly led on by vile affections to every abomination, ignorant of God and your own danger, and rushing headlong to ruin; *but now are ye light in the Lord*, since he hath shone into your hearts, and given you the knowledge of his will, and turned you to his blessed Self in the practice of true holiness; therefore *walk as children of light*, agreeable to the obligations lying upon you, and the measure of knowledge and grace which you have received. *For the fruit of the Spirit, which the Lord hath given you to illumine your darkness, and quicken your souls from the death of sin, is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*; it appears in every act of tenderness and beneficence towards the needy, in all purity of heart towards God, and uprightness in our dealings with men; and engages us to a holy simplicity and unimpeachable fidelity, in all our words and works; in which things, as children of light, you must therefore habitually walk; *proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, desiring out*

of his word to learn his mind and will, and to approve yourselves to him in all holy conversation and godliness. *And, for this end, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, neither by countenance, nor connivance at them in others, any more than by practising them yourselves; they are *works of darkness*, the deeds of a fallen and corrupted heart, and which seek usually the covert of the night; *unfruitful of every thing but misery, wrath, and wretchedness*. Instead, therefore, of joining in them, rather, wherever they appear, bear an open testimony against them; and, with zeal tempered with love, boldly *reprove them*. *Note*, (1.) The fallen mind, in its mere natural state, is darkness itself: they who are under its influence take hold of the paths of death and hell, and know not whither they are going. (2.) Where God hath given us the light of his truth, every wilful sin is greatly aggravated. (3.) They who are truly sensible of the evil and danger of sin, will not see it upon their brother without a kind and faithful rebuke.

[3.] The very shocking and shameful nature of these sins should deter us from them. *For it is a shame even to speak of those things, which are done of them in secret*: the very mention of them must offend a modest ear; and how much more must the practice of them provoke a holy God? *But all things that are reprov'd, as such evils must be, are made manifest by the light of God's word, which hath shone into your hearts, and are thereby discovered in their native deformity, and hateful colours; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light*; as the sun illumines the world, which otherwise would be covered in darkness, so does Christ in his gospel, arising as the Sun of Righteousness, shine into the hearts of his believing people, giving them light and discernment in spiritual things, which were before utterly hidden from their eyes; and enabling them to see the evil and danger of those tempers and practices, which before they never apprehended. *Wherefore be faithful, when calling the souls of sinners out of darkness into his marvellous light, Awake thou that sleepest in security, ignorance, and insensibility, and arise from the dead, from thy state of death, in trespasses and sins, and Christ shall give thee light, the light of life and truth, to conduct thee in the paths of holiness, and, at last, if faithful, to the regions of glory; and wherever this light is spoken into the soul, then it will be evident by an abhorrence of evil, and such a conversation as will bear the strictest scrutiny.*

4. On what he had said, he grounds this farther exhortation: *See then that ye walk circumspectly*, narrowly examining every step you take, *not as fools, but as wise*, as those who have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus; *redeeming the time, making the best improvement of the present moment, and desirous to retrieve the time and opportunity which has been lost; because the days are evil, and require great watchfulness when iniquity so abounds, when temptations so many and great beset you; and you know not how soon you may be cut off. Wherefore, be*

God from the heart ;

the Lord, and not to men :

7 ^f With good-will doing service, ^a as to8 Knowing ^b that whatsoever good thing^f Gen. 31. 6, 40. Col. 3. 23.
Col. 3. 24. Gal. 6. 9. with 3. 28.^a Ver. 5, 6. 2 Cor. 10. 31. 1 Pet. 4. 11. & 2. 9.^b Rom. 2. 6, 7, 10. 1 Cor. 7. 19. 28. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

ye not unwise, as in the former days of folly and unregeneracy, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, that ye may know how to walk and please him, and be found faithful to the light which he is pleased to give you. Note, (1.) If we consider how much of our time we have abused and squandered, it will become us, with peculiar diligence, to improve the pittance which remains. (2.) Evil days require especial circumspection. (3.) The worst and most fatal folly is the ignorance of God's word, and the neglect of our souls.

How we must redeem our time, and walk according to the divine prescription, the Apostle, in several particulars, proceeds to shew.

[1.] *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess*, for the dreadful consequences of drunkenness are numberless ; for when the mind is once intoxicated, a wide door is opened to every act of extravagance, folly, riot, debauchery, and uncleanness, and there remains no restraint from the greatest abominations.

[2.] *But, on the contrary, be filled with the Spirit* ; seek to drink deeper into the sacred fountain of his divine light, grace, strength, and consolation, which will inspire the most exquisite and sacred pleasure and delight ; not roaring round the board of riot, and joining the mad songs of the drunken, but *speaking to yourselves*, and each other, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, uniting your voices in the Redeemer's praise, *singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*, with inward exultation in God as your Saviour, and every outward expression that tends to exalt his great and glorious name, *giving thanks always for all things*, your hearts in every dispensation acknowledging a gracious God, and your tongue employed in thanksgiving unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone all our services are accepted, and by whom all the dispensations of providence and grace are made to work together for the good of true believers. Note, (1.) Psalmody is a gospel ordinance, and they who are happy in God will delight in his praises. (2.) Whatever our condition, or circumstances may be, there is always room for thanksgiving. Afflictions, as well as mercies, demand a grateful acknowledgment ; they are good for us, and we shall, in the issue, find the blessed effects of them.

2dly, The Apostle proceeds to exhort them to the discharge of those relative duties, which are the great ornaments of Christianity.

In general, a spirit of gentleness and mutual forbearance must reign in you, *submitting yourselves one to another*, in all natural and civil relations, in public and private, making conscience of discharging the duties of your several stations, in the fear of God, being willingly in all due subjection to those whom he hath placed as your superiors.

1. The duty of wives is to *submit themselves unto their own husbands*, in all reverence, honour, and dutiful obedience ; consulting their will, and content to be in subjection

as unto the Lord, regarding him as the author of their subordination, and submitting, as the church doth, to him. For the husband is the head of the wife, by divine appointment, as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body, having bought her even at the expence of his own blood, and with the most endearing tenderness and affection providing whatever is needful for her support and comfort. Therefore as the church is bound, by every tie of love and duty, to be subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing not contradictory to their duty towards God. Note, The direction is clear and obvious ; but the difficulty is for a fallen spirit to acquiesce. Let those, therefore, who enter into the marriage state seriously consider their obligations, before they lay themselves under the solemn vow of obedience.

2. The duty of husbands is this ; *Love your wives* with singleness of affection, which speaks in every word and look of tenderness, with gentleness desiring to rule, not tyrannize, and, by every endearing art of persuasion, winning obedience, rather than haughtily and imperiously demanding subjection, remembering and imitating the love of Christ to his church, who gave himself for it, even to the death of the cross, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, in his atoning blood opening a fountain for sin and uncleanness, to which, by faith, every genuine penitent may come according to his word, and be effectually delivered from all their guilt and defilement ; that, being thus cleansed, he might present it to himself, as a chaste virgin, adorned for her heavenly bridegroom, a glorious church, beautiful through his Blood and Spirit, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but appearing in perfect comeliness and purity ; that, as the sacrifices under the law, it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives, according to this love of Christ, even as their own bodies, they being now a real part of themselves : he that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it ; our own flesh is not nearer to us than our wives ; and the same affectionate care is due to them, even as the Lord hath shewed to the church : for we are members of his body mystical, of his flesh, and of his bones, like the woman formed from the first man's side. For this cause, seeing the union is so close, shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, in peculiar singleness of affection ; and they two shall be one flesh, as if they literally became one body. This is a great mystery, these words being figurative of a more happy and excellent marriage than that of the first man and woman ; and I mean, in their application, to lead you, not merely to consider the original law of marriage, but I speak concerning Christ and the church, to whom they emphatically belong. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, as the members of his own body ; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband with all conjugal love, and jealous fear of offending.

any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *be be* bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, * forbearing threatening: knowing that † your Master also is in heaven; † neither is there respect of persons with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, ^m be strong in the Lord, and in ⁿ the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the ^p wiles of the devil.

¹ Col. 4. 1. Lev. 25. 43. & 29. 13. Deut. 24. 14, 15. ² Sam. 25. 17. ³ Or moderating. ⁴ Your and their master. Mat. 8. 19. & 10. 25. John, 13. 12. Deut. 10. 17. ² Cor. 19. 7. Job, 34. 19. Acts, 10. 34. Gal. 2. 6. Rom. 2. 11. ¹ Pet. 1. 17. ^m If. 45. 24. & 40. 29, 31. Zech. 10. 12. ² Tim. 2. 1. ¹ Cor. 16. 13. ² Cor. 3. 5. & 13. 9. 10. Phil. 4. 13. Col. 1. 12. ⁿ Ch. 1. 19. & 3. 16. Heb. 7. 25. ^o Rom. 11. 12. ² Cor. 6. 7. Col. 3. 12. ¹ Thes. 5. 8. ² Cor. 10. 4. ^p ² Cor. 2. 11. & 11. 3, 13, 24. ² Thes. 2. 9, 10. Rev. 2. 24. & 12. 9. ¹ Pet. 5. 8.

CHAP. VI.

THE Apostle, having explained the duties of wives and husbands, proceeds to the duties of children and parents, ver. 1—4, then to those of servants and masters, ver. 5—9, and with these he finishes his account of relative duties.

Having delivered these precepts, the Apostle added a general exhortation to the Ephesians, to be strong in the performance of all their duties; which he enforced by the discovery of another deep article of the mystery of God; namely, that evil angels are leagued together against men, and continually occupied in tempting them to sin, with a view to ruin them, ver. 10—12.—But that the Ephesians might not be too much terrified with this discovery, the Apostle shewed them what an excellent defence against the attacks of the devil God had furnished them with, in the complete armour which he had provided for them, ver. 13—18. called therefore *the complete armour of God*.

Next, the Apostle begged the Ephesians to pray for him, that he might be enabled to speak plainly and boldly in support of the gospel, when brought before the emperor and his ministers; which, it seems, he expected would happen soon, ver. 19, 20.—But to free them from their anxiety on account of the danger he was exposed to, he told them, that he had sent Tychicus to give them information concerning his affairs, ver. 21, 22.—Then, as a token of his love, he gave to them, and to all the brethren of Asia, who were sincere in their attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ, his apostolical benediction, ver. 23, 24.

Ver. 2. *Which is the first commandment with promise;*] The church of Rome would hence argue, that the second commandment, which forbids the worship of images, having a promise added to it, of God's shewing mercy to thousands in them that love him and keep his commandments, can be no longer obligatory under the gospel; since this which relates to honouring of parents, is said to be *the first commandment with promise*. But it is easy to discern the fallacy and weakness of this argument, as what is annexed to the second commandment apparently relates to the *whole law*, and is a general declaration of the mercy which God would shew to those who kept, not only that, but all his commandments; while this of which the Apostle speaks, is the first and only precept of the decalogue, which has a particular promise annexed to it peculiar to itself.

Ver. 3. *That—thou mayest live long, &c.*] It has been observed, that the Apostle does not say, *upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, that he might not encourage a vain hope in the Jews of continuing in the land of Canaan.

And if it were considered that those to whom he was writing were chiefly Gentile converts, the clause would very properly be omitted in this view, as it must better suit the case of the whole church to express the promise in a general way.

Ver. 4. *Ye fathers, provoke not your children, &c.*] “Ye fathers, be careful not to exasperate your children, by an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour; by rigorous severity; left by this means you should excite them to such a secret indignation, as may make it difficult for them to restrain those expressions of wrath, which, in such a relation, would be very indecent: and, among other evil consequences of such a conduct, there is great reason also to conclude, that it would naturally prejudice them against Christianity, and thus would bring upon yourselves a share in the guilt of their disobedience, and their ruin.” By *the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, is meant, “Such a course of discipline and instruction as properly belongs to a religious education; which ought to be employed in forming them for the Lord, by laying a restraint upon the first appearances of every vicious passion, and nourishing them with the words of faith, and of good doctrine.” See 1 Tim. iv. 6.

Ver. 6. *Not with eye-service.*] “Not as attending on their business only while their master's eyes are upon them.” Grotius takes notice of the great elegance of the *compound words* made use of here in the original; which our translators have endeavoured to imitate. But as the Greek abounds more in such compound words than any other language, so St. Paul has frequently introduced them in his writings.

Ver. 9. *Forbearing threatening.*] “Forbearing not only cruel and dangerous blows, but all severe and rigorous threatening; and every thing of an over-hasty and tyrannical conduct.” Mr. Locke paraphrases it: “Forbearing the roughness even of unnecessary menaces.”

Ver. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God.*] The word in the original is πανοπλια, panoply, which includes all sorts of armour, whether offensive or defensive. This the Apostle applies to the exercise of all those Christian graces with which we are furnished by God, to be made use of in his strength, as well to annoy the enemy, as to defend ourselves; and it appears by the particular description which the Apostle here proceeds to give of it, to be a suit of armour, every way complete, and properly adapted to the defence of every part; with this exception, that none is provided for the back; to hint to us, as some have observed, that we must always face the enemy, or we shall soon

12 For we wrestle not against ^a flesh and blood, but against ^r principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against ^{*} spiritual wickedness in [†] high places.

13 Wherefore ^r take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the ^r evil day, and [‡] having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, ^u having your loins girt

about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

15 ^{*} And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 [‡] Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take ^z the helmet of salvation, and ^a the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

^a Mat. 16. 17. Gal. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 50. ^r Col. 2. 15. Ch. 2. 2. John, 12. 31. & 14. 30. & 16. 11. Job, 2. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 4. 4. & 11. 7. ^{*} Or wicked spirits. [†] Or heavenly. [‡] See ver. 11. ^u Ch. 5. 16. Luke, 8. 13. Gal. 1. 4. Eccl. 11. 2. & 12. 1. ^z Or having overcome all. [†] If. 11. 5. Luke, 12. 35. & 17. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 13. 2 Cor. 6. 7. If. 50. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 8. ^a Song, 7. 1. If. 52. 7. Rom. 10. 15. 1 Thes. 1. 5. ^r 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. 1 John, 5. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 23. Heb. xi. 2 Chron. 20. 20. If. 7. 9. with Gen. 15. 1. Pf. 56. 4. ^z If. 59. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 8. ^a Heb. 4. 12. Rev. 11. 16. & 2. 16. & 19. 15. If. 49. 2. Mat. 4. 4, 7, 10, 11.

soon lie open to his attacks, and have no defence from dangers. The reader will find, in Gurnall's "Christian in complete Armour," a very large and practical improvement of this portion of Sacred Scripture.

Ver. 12. *Principalities, against powers,*] These are put here for those revolted angels, who stood in opposition to the kingdom of God. The *rulers of the darkness of this world*, seems to mean those who have long usurped a dominion over the world, and who, in the present age, hold men in the chains of hereditary superstition and destructive errors, which have been delivered down to them through many succeeding generations. There is somewhat peculiar in the original of the next clause, which Mr. Locke paraphrases, "the spiritual managers of the opposition to the kingdom of God." There is no doubt but it refers to those revolted spirits who are continually employed in propagating wickedness. Some, however, would render the last words *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*, about heavenly things; as signifying that we wrestle with them to secure to ourselves those spiritual and eternal blessings, of which they would endeavour to deprive us.

Ver. 14. *Having your loins girt about, &c.*] It has often been observed, that the *military girdle* was not only an ornament, but a defence; as it hid the gaping *joints* of the armour, and kept them close and steady, as well as fortified the loins of those who wore it, rendering them more vigorous and fit for action. The chief difficulty here is to know, whether *truth* refers to the *true principles of religion*, or to *integrity in our conduct*; and how, on the latter interpretation, to keep it distinct from the *breast-plate of righteousness*; or, on the former, from the *shield of faith*: but perhaps it may rather signify some *virtue of the mind*, as do all the other parts of the armour enumerated; and then it must refer to that uprightiness and sincerity of intention, which produces righteousness, or a holy and equitable conduct, as its proper fruit.

Ver. 15. *Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*] "With that peaceful and benevolent temper which is so much recommended by the gospel, as an essential part of the Christian character; and which, like the boots worn by soldiers, will bear you unhurt through the

"many difficulties and trials, which, like sharp-pointed thorns, may lie in your way, and dangerously obstruct your progress." Mr. Locke understands by this, an habitual readiness to walk in the way of the gospel of peace; as if it were intended, as a general injunction, to obey all its precepts: but it evidently appears to be designed, in a particular manner, to point out the preparation which the gospel makes for our defence, by that peaceful temper which it so often teaches and inculcates.

Ver. 16. *Above all,*] *Over and above all.* Blackwall. This last translation best answers to the particle *ἐπι* here used, and best expresses the allusion to the *situation of the shield*, as covering the other pieces of the armour;—which has here a beautiful propriety, as *truth, righteousness, and peace*, are sheltered, as it were, by *faith*, from the assaults which might otherwise overbear them. Many commentators suppose that the Apostle, in the last clause of this verse, *be able to quench, &c.* refers to an ancient custom, still prevailing among the Indians and other barbarous nations, to dip their arrows in the blood and gall of asps and vipers, and other poisonous preparations, which fire the blood of those who are wounded with them, occasion exquisite pain, and make the least wound mortal: and some Greek writers tell us, that it was usual for soldiers to have shields made of raw hides, which immediately quenched them. It is also certain, that some arrows were discharged with so great a velocity, that they fired in their passage. If the Apostle alludes to this, he may mean to hint those furious suggestions which the Wicked one may sometimes discharge into the mind, like so many envenomed arrows, or darts, which kindle by the swiftness of their passage.

Ver. 17. *And take the helmet of salvation, &c.*] "Possess that cheerful hope of complete deliverance and eternal happiness, which will cover your head in the day of battle, and give you a well-grounded boldness and confidence, which will greatly conduce to your success: and brandish in your hand the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, those declarations of his word and gospel which his Spirit has inspired, and by a firm confidence in which you will be able, not only to defend yourselves, but to repel your adversaries."

Ver.

18 ^b Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and ^c watching thereunto with ^d all perseverance and supplication for ^e all saints ;

19 ^f And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may ^g open my mouth boldly, to make known the ^h mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am ⁱ an ambassador * in bonds : that † therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21 ^k But that ye also may know my affairs,

and how I do, ^l Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things :

22 ^m Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

23 ⁿ Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 ^o Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ ^p in sincerity. Amen.

^b Luke, 18. 1. Rom. 12. 12. Col. 4. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Mark, 13. 33. Ch. 1. 16. Phil. 1. 4. Rom. 8. 26, 27. Jude, 20. ^c Mark, 13. 37. Mt. 24. 42, 44. & 25. 13. Rev. 16. 15. ^d Luke, 18. 1—8. 2 Cor. 12. 8. Mat. 15. 22—28. ^e Gal. 6. 10. James, 5. 16. 1 Tim. 2. 1. Rom. 15. 30. Col. 3. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 25. 2 Thes. 3. 1. ^f Acts, 4. 29. 2 Tim. 1. 7. Rom. 1. 16. 1 Tim. 5. 21. 2 Cor. 3. 12. ^g Mat. 13. 1. & 16. 17. 1 Cor. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Ch. 3. 1, 4. Col. 1. 26, 27. ^h 2 Cor. 5. 20. Ch. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 3. 12. with Acts, 26. 29. & 28. 20. 31. Ch. 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1. Phil. 1. 7, 13, 20. Col. 4. 18. 2 Tim. 2. 1, 8, 16 & 2. 9. Philem. 9. 10. ⁱ Or in a chain. † Or thereof. ^k Col. 4. 7. Phil. 1. 12. ^l Acts, 20. 4. 2 Tim. 4. 12. Tit. 3. 12. ^m Ver. 21. Col. 4. 8. 1 Thes. 3. 2. Phil. 2. 19. 1 Cor. 16. 10. ⁿ See ch. 1. 2. 3. Pf. 122. 6—9. Phil. 1. 9—11. Col. 1. 10, 11. Jude, 1. 2. ^o See Gal. 6. 18. 2 Cor. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 16. 23. Rom. 16. 20, 24. ^p Or without corruption. Tit. 2. 7. John, 21. 15—17. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Pf. 25. 21. Pf. 18. 1. Mat. 22. 27.

Ver. 18. *Watching thereunto with all perseverance*] “Be assiduously careful to maintain a praying frame of spirit, and to watch for all convenient seasons for prayer; as also to watch against the designs and methods of your adversaries, and for all opportunities and assistances to annoy and defeat them; and to watch for all influences of the Spirit in prayer, and for all answers to prayer; and see that you be constant and unwearied herein, without fainting, though you may not receive immediate answers of peace.”

Ver. 19. *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me,*] *And for me in particular, that I may, with freedom and plainness of speech, preach the word.”*

Ver. 20. *For which I am an ambassador in bonds :*] Some would render the original (ωπεστέρος ἐν ἰσχύει) *I grow old in a chain :* comp. Philem. ver. 9. the phrase where Παιδῶ ωπεστέρος signifies *Paul the aged*. But it is certain that the common version of this passage may be justified. As the persons of ambassadors were always sacred, the Apostle seems to refer to the outrage which was done to his divine Master in this violation of his liberty.

Ver. 21. *Tychicus, a beloved brother*] He was one of St. Paul's friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview that he had with the elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. See Acts, xx. 4, 17.

Ver. 24. *In sincerity.*] The Greek word signifies *in incorruption*, ἀφθαρσία. Mr. Locke explains the word of such a *love* as would prevent men's *mixing* any thing with the gospel which was not genuine, and might render it intellectual. Comp. Gal. v. 2. 4. But it seems rather to express that uprightness of heart which is opposed to the putting on false pretences, and may, with great propriety, be understood as a general description of a true Christian :

and indeed it is manifest, that wherever this unfeigned, this inviolable *love to Christ* prevails, there will, of course, be all the other essential parts of the Christian character. *

Inferences.—It is matter of thankful acknowledgment, that the Almighty God condescends in his word to give us *particular instructions*, suited to the circumstances in which we are respectively placed. *Children and servants* are not forgotten. Let them attend to those gracious lessons which are here given by the supreme Parent and Master, who, while he teaches them, *pleads their cause*, and interposes his high authority to vindicate them from oppression and abuse.

Much of the happiness of society evidently depends on the temper and conduct of those who are placed in these *lower relations*. Let *children*, therefore, learn to be subject to their parents, with all dutiful and humble respect, from a sense of the reasonableness of the *command*, and of the goodness which has annexed such a *promise* to it; a promise which shall still be efficacious, so far as long life would be indeed a blessing to a pious child.

Servants, with all godly *simplicity* and uprightness of heart, should revere the authority of Christ in them that are their *masters according to the flesh*; and exercise a good conscience towards them upon all occasions, not only when *under their eye*, but in their absence; well knowing that God is always present, and always attentive to the conduct of every rational creature, in whatsoever rank. Let them cherish that inward *good-will*, and benevolence of heart, which renders every act of *service* uniform and steady, and makes it, in a degree, *obliging*, even when performed by those from whom authority might have extorted it: nor let the certain and important *reward* which will assuredly follow every good action, whether great or small,—whether

* See Locke, Lardner, Doddridge, Michaelis, Whitby, Bos, Bengelius, Calmer, Pearson, Sherlock, Sharpe, Mede, Goodwin, Limborch, Taylor, Leland, Warburton, Josephus, Junius, Poole, Dodari, Wolfius, Heylin, Franckins, Blackwell, Grotius, Vitringa, Hammond, Chrysostom, Owen, Mintert, Rollin, Bates, Luther, Schmidius, Stockus, Barro u., Bowyer, Menochius, Guroall, and Raphelius.

performed by persons in more elevated or inferior stations of life, fail to animate us all to a zealous diligence in well-doing, whatever discouragement may at present attend us.

Those who bear the *superior relations* in life should remember, that the command of a much higher *Parent* and *Lord* requires also of them a tender regard to their inferiors. Let *Parents*, therefore, govern their own passions, that they may not terrify and oppress the tender spirits of their children; or, if they be otherwise than *tender*, may not *teach them an evil-lesson against themselves*, and by their own example strengthen them in those excesses, which may be a disgrace and detriment to the family; and when age has broken all the vigour of the parents, may *bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*. A conscientious care to *educate* and train them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, if duly attended to, will teach a better conduct; and the *meekness and gentleness of Christ* will have a happy influence on both.

Again, let the thoughts of that great impartial *Master in heaven*, awe masters upon earth; and the expectation, the certain expectation of giving an account to Him, engage them to make the *yoke of servitude*, which God has been pleased to lay on those, who are nevertheless their brethren, as light and easy as they can; choosing, even when they might *command with authority*, rather to *intreat with love*: not doing or saying any thing unnecessarily rigorous, or severe; not *threatening, reviling, or reproaching*, but treating their servants like those whom they consider as partakers with them in the *same hope*, or whom they earnestly desire, by all prudent condescension and tenderness, to *lead into the way of salvation*.

Let the heart of every *Christian soldier* be at once awakened and animated by the important *charge* which the Apostle, as it were, still sounds in our ears. He knew the weakness of the *Christian*, and the dangers of his way; how insufficient for the spiritual warfare we are in ourselves, and that our only *strength* is in *the Lord*, and in *the power of his might*, by whom alone we can be kept in safety, and may be made even *more than conquerors in all things*: and therefore, pointing us to this, at the same time that he sets forth the difficulty of the combat, and sounds a charge to the battle, he shews us the provision made for our defence, and calls us to *put on the complete armour of God*; an armour, which will serve for every part; which will supply us both with offensive and defensive weapons, and help us to withstand, and even to surmount, the greatest opposition. Let us see to it, then, that we both *put on*, and that we use it all.

And when we consider the greatness and number of our *enemies*, their restless and unwearied *malice*, and their inconceivable *subtlety*,—have we not enough to engage us in the application of this divine *panoply*? *Flesh and blood* have too, too frequently worried us; how then should we stand against *principalities and powers*; against *the rulers of the darkness of this world*, and against *spirits of wickedness*, who make it still their business to draw others into that *spiritual wickedness*, which they were first so daring as to *shew in heavenly places*?

Indeed, it will be impossible that we should, at any time, be safe from danger, if every direction here given be not diligently attended to: having such a numerous and mighty

host of enemies combined against us, we shall never be able to withstand and overcome them,—if the *girdle of truth* be loosened,—if the *breast-plate of righteousness* be not put on,—if the *preparation of the gospel of peace* do not secure our steps;—if the *helmet of salvation* do not guard our head,—if the *shield of faith* be not our defence and shelter, and the *sword of the Spirit* our weapon. And vainly shall we labour to obtain *this armour* by any other method, if *fervent prayer and supplication in the Spirit*, under the aids and influences of his grace, be not addressed to the *God of heaven*, whose work and whose gift this celestial armour is: so that if ever we would have it, and use it aright, let us persist in seeking it with holy importunity and *perseverance*, and the desired answer shall not always be denied.

To conclude. Let us often contemplate the great Apostle St. Paul, as *discharging his embassy in a chain*, that so we may learn to submit to whatever affronts and injuries, whatever hardships and sufferings we may be called to endure, on the account of religion, concerned about nothing so much as that we may *approve our fidelity* in the sight of God; and, *loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, may be partakers of the blessings of *his grace*, with all that have a true affection for him. All who appear to be of such a character, may we ever most affectionately love, whatever their particular sentiments, or forms of worship may be; for thus, a share of *this mercy and favour*, with all the blessed fruits of *peace and prosperity, of love and faith*, shall be infallibly our own, and be communicated in a rich abundance to our souls, from *God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle proceeds with those relative duties which he had begun to enforce in the former chapter, beginning still with the inferior relation; for dutiful obedience will lay the strongest obligations on the superior to shew all condescension and love in return. We have,

1. The duty of children to their parents. *Children obey your parents*; hear their counsels, and submit to their commands, this being the debt that you owe them, both as the authors, under God, of your being, and for all the care they have shewn you; and this in *the Lord*, as far as is agreeable to his word, and for his glory. *Honour thy father and mother*, says the law; reverence them, speak respectfully to and of them, and, if needful, provide for them (*which is the first commandment with a particular promise annexed to it*), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

2. The duty of parents. *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath*, by unreasonable tasks, severities, or restraints; but with all lenity, tenderness, and affection, endeavour, by love and kind persuasion, to win upon them; and *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, instructing them in the knowledge of the scriptures, setting before them a gracious example, directing them to the means of grace, and watching over them with holy jealousy.

3. The duty of servants. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh*, in all their lawful commands, with becoming fear of their displeasure, and trembling, lest at any time you should justly offend them; in

in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ, without flattery, deceit, or guile, with a regard to the Redeemer's glory: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, diligent only so long as they look over you, merely to curry favour with them; but as the servants of Christ, under his constant and all-seeing inspection, and therefore doing the will of God from the heart, and discharging the duties of the station in which he hath placed you with all fidelity and truth—with good-will doing service, with cheerfulness and alacrity, from a principle of love to your masters, and a real zeal for their honour and interest; and this as to the Lord, and not to men, desiring, not so much human, as the divine approbation, and acting from a sense of duty to the great Lord of all—knowing, that whatsoever good thing any man doth, however mean his station, and inconsiderable in itself the service may be, the same shall he receive of the Lord, who will suitably reward his fidelity, whether he be bond or free.

4. The duty of masters. *And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, shew the same readiness conscientiously to discharge your relation to them, forbearing threatening, not tyrannizing over them, and terrifying them with sternness and menaces; but choosing to rule by love rather than fear, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, to whom you must give an account; neither is there respect of persons with him; all shall stand at his bar on a level, and must receive from his lips their eternal sentence for happiness or misery.*

2dly, Every Christian is enlisted under the banners of Jesus, to fight the Lord's battles; and to maintain unceasing war against sin, the world, and the devil. The Apostle, therefore, warmly exhorts them to acquit themselves as men, under the glorious Captain of their salvation. *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, supported by those almighty influences of grace which he supplies, in whom alone standeth our help, and from whom cometh our salvation. Put on the whole armour of God, as a soldier covered from head to foot with armour proof against any weapon, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and neither be seduced by his ensnaring temptations, nor terrified by his suggestions, from the path of duty.*

1. The enemies that we have to conflict with are described. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, not only against the temptations arising from our passions and appetites, or from the wicked men of this world who oppose and persecute, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, even against those legions of malignant spirits, who, under their hateful leader, have erected a kingdom of darkness, and enslaved the souls of men, and hover round us, watching for an opportunity to distress, harass, trouble, and destroy those who have escaped from their hateful bondage.*

2. Having such foes, we need be well armed against their assaults. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, so absolutely necessary for this dangerous conflict, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, when this hour of temptation and danger comes, and, having done all, to stand faithfully, acquitting yourselves as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, through every trial, however sharp or prolonged. Stand, therefore, the enemy advances, be ready to receive him, looking up to your Almighty Support, and invulnerable in the divine panoply. The Chris-*

tian's complete armour, both offensive and defensive, is here described in military terms; the back alone is left unguarded; for we must conquer or die. Flight is sure to be fatal to the coward soul.

[1.] Truth must be our military girdle. *Having your loins girt about with truth, firm in the doctrines of the gospel, and sincere in the profession of it, in simplicity approving yourselves before the heart-searching God.*

[2.] Righteousness is our breast-plate—*Having on the breast-plate of righteousness, justice, integrity, and all the other fruits of holiness and love, to guard the vital parts from the stroke of the envenomed foe.*

[3.] Our sandals must be the gospel of peace—*Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; that whatever rough ways we walk in, and whatever difficulties we meet with, we may stand fast in the gospel of Jesus, prepared for every conflict, established on the sure foundation, enjoying peace with God in our own souls, and following it with all men.*

[4.] Faith is our shield—*Above all, as the most necessary piece of armour, and that which covers the whole body, taking the shield of faith; having lively and realizing views of the divine promises of pardon, grace, and glory, confidently resting upon them; wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, when with fury he hurls his envenomed temptations at the soul, to despair, blasphemy, lewdness, rage, &c. seeking to bring horror, guilt, anguish, and distress upon the conscience: but divine faith repels them all, or quenches them, and they fall harmless at our feet.*

[5.] Salvation is our helmet—*And take the helmet of salvation, that blessed hope of life eternal, springing from the bright witness of the Spirit of God, which guards from dejection, and raises us superior to every fear.*

[6.] The mighty sword is the word of God—*And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, before which the legions of darkness cannot stand, when wielded by the faithful soldier, slaying every temptation, and opening a way through hosts of difficulties.*

[7.] Prayer must be added—*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; looking upwards constantly for divine support, in every emergency casting your care upon God, in ejaculations, and, at stated solemn seasons, commending yourselves into the Lord's hand; and watching thereunto with all perseverance, never weary or giving over, though the conflict be hard and long, and no immediate answer received. And, as for yourselves, so also continue ceaseless in supplication for all saints, engaged in the same warfare, contending with the same enemies, and needing the same divine support; and, among others, for me also, under my trials, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, fearless of any consequences, to make known the mystery of the gospel, and publish the glad tidings with all zeal, openness, and freedom of speech, without concealing any of the glorious truths, however offensive they may be to men's pride, or love of sin: for which fidelity I am an ambassador of Christ in bonds, suffering cheerfully, and still desiring, even in a prison, to negotiate the great affair of reconciliation between God and sinners: and I entreat your prayers, that therein, under whatsoever difficulties I struggle, I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak, undaunted in my spirit, and without molestation.* Note, (1.) Prayer is the Christian's constant re-

course, and sure support in every exigence. (2.) While we continue persevering in our supplications, we shall assuredly go on conquering and to conquer. (3.) We should mutually remember each other at the throne of grace; all faints need our prayers, and should have an interest in them.

3dly, Having desired an interest in their prayers, he concludes this Epistle,

I. With recommending Tychicus to them, the bearer of this Epistle. *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do in my present confinement, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things concerning my situation, labours, treatment and success, even in bonds: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts, amidst all the trials that you meet*

with, and encourage you, from my example, patiently and cheerfully to persevere in the good ways of the Lord.

2. He closes with his usual benediction and prayer. *Peace be to the brethren; may you enjoy a sweet sense of God's favour, be blest with all prosperity, temporal and spiritual, and live in the most uninterrupted harmony among yourselves: and may love to God and to each other abound, with faith in the most lively and vigorous exercise; all which spiritual blessings flow from God the Father, as their Source in the œconomy of redemption, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the purchaser and dispenser of them to his faithful people. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, with unfeigned affection, or, in incorruption, without adulterating the doctrines of truth, or admitting any earthly thing to rival him in their hearts. Thus in faith he prays, and adds his joyful Amen!*

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

P R E F A C E.

IN this Epistle St. Paul manifests an extraordinary regard for the Christians of Philippi, which was one of the chief cities of Macedonia. The readiness that they had shewn in receiving the Gospel, which St. Paul, by an express command from Heaven, first went there to preach, (Acts, xvi. 9, 10. 12.) the singular devotion which reigned among them, and their generous care in sending him a considerable sum for his subsistence while in prison at Rome, had justly won upon his affections. But, as St. Paul could not make them a return more worthy of himself, nor more advantageous to them, than by labouring to confirm them in the faith, and to encourage them in the practice of the Christian virtues, this is chiefly insisted upon in the present Epistle, but in a manner so affectionate, that no one, unless void of all relish for holiness, can read it unmoved. When St. Paul would shew the Philippians to what an extent he wishes for their happiness, he makes no difference between their's and his own; and he even prefers, in some degree, the consolation of living for them to the happiness of being freed from the miseries of this life, and of being in heaven with Christ, ch. i. 22. When he would inspire them with those sentiments of meekness, of charity, and of humility, so much recommended in the Gospel, he lays before them, in terms so full of instruction and consolation, the voluntary abasement of Christ, ch. ii. 5, 6, &c that this single passage of his Epistle is of inestimable value to the church, offering a fund of light capable of clearing away the thickest clouds of error and heresy. When he warns the Philippians against the seductions of false teachers, who every where undertook to pervert sound doctrine, ch. iii. 1, &c. he performs it with an earnestness that equally shews his zeal for the truth and his peculiar anxiety for the faith of the Philippians. Finally, when he would excite their utmost diligence, to make a daily progress in holiness, and to approach unceasingly nearer to heaven, he describes himself as engaged in a common cause with them in the same career; that, on the one hand, they might not be disheartened, as if they were yet far distant, and that he had left them very much behind him; and, on the other, to encourage them to run together with him, and to shew the same ardour in a race which was common to both. The remainder of this Epistle, to the end, is in the same style; and the whole of the 4th chapter, which is the last, breathes nothing but love, a total disregard of the things of this life, and such deep humility and resignation to God's providence, as ought to be a lesson and an example to the church throughout all ages.

C H A P. I.

He testifieth his thankfulness to God, and his love toward them, for the fruits of their faith, and fellowship in his sufferings; daily praying to him for their increase in grace: he sheweth what good the faith of Christ had received by his troubles at Rome, and how ready he is to glorify Christ, either by his life or death: exhorting them to unity, and to fortitude in persecution.

[Anno Domini 62.]

PAUL^a and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to^b all the saints in Christ

^a 2 Cor. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 1. Philem. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 1. Rom. 1. 8, 9, 16. ^b See Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Heb. 3. 1. John, 15. 2. ^c Acts, 16. 12—40. ^d Or *superseers*. Acts, 20. 17, 28. 1 Tim. 3. 1—13. Tit. 1. 5—9. Heb. 13. 7, 17. Pet. 5. 1—3. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Acts, 6. 1—3. ^e See Eph. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Rom. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. Jude, 2. ^f Rom. 1. 8—10. 1 Cor. 1. 4. Eph. 1. 15, 16. & 6. 18. Col. 1. 3. 1 Thes. 1. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 3—5. Philem. 4. ^g Or *mention*. ^h Eph. 3. 6. 1 John, 1. 3, 7. or Rom. 12. 13. & 15. 26. 2 Cor. 8. 4. & 9. 13. Gal. 6. 6. Ch. 4. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Heb. 13. 16.

C H A P. I.

AFTER giving the Philippians, with their bishops and deacons, his apostolical benediction, St. Paul thanked God for their conversion; and declared his humble hope and confidence that God would preserve them in the faith to the end of their lives, as it was meet for him to think, because he had them in his heart: he also expressed the most tender affection for them; and prayed God to bestow upon them spiritual blessings, that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness, ver. 1—11.—In the next place, lest they might have been afraid that his long imprisonment had been hurtful to the gospel of Christ, he assured them that it had contributed to advance that good cause, ver. 12.—inasmuch that the gospel was now known in the palace itself, ver. 13.—That the indulgence shewn to him, had made many of the brethren more bold in preaching than formerly, ver. 14.—yet they were not all actuated by laudable motives, ver. 15. For some preached publicly, merely to enrage the priests and magistrates against him, as the ringleader of the Christians, ver. 16.—But he told the Philippians, he knew that this, through the direction of the Spirit of Christ, would rather contribute to his enlargement, ver. 19.—At the same time he declared his resolution boldly to defend the gospel when brought before the emperor, even although it were to bring death upon himself, ver. 20.—To be continued in life, he told them, would promote the cause of Christ, but to die would be more for his own advantage, ver. 21.—Therefore he was in a strait, whether to choose life or death, ver. 23.—Only knowing that his continuing in life would be more for their interest, ver. 24.—he was persuaded that he should still live, ver. 25.—In which case he promised to visit them, ver. 26.—In the mean time he exhorted them all to behave suitably to the gospel; and, in particular, strenuously to maintain the true doctrine of the gospel, both against the unbelieving Jews and against the Heathens, ver. 27.—and to be in no respect terrified for their threatenings, ver. 28.—but to suffer cheerfully for their faith in Christ, ver. 29. after his own example, ver. 30.

PHILIPPIANS.] Philippi was a city of no great extent, in Macedonia, on the borders of Thrace. The Christian religion was first planted there about the year 51, by

Jesus which are at^c Philippi, with the^d bishops and deacons:

2^e Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3^f I thank my God upon every^{*} remembrance of you,

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5 For your^g fellowship in the gospel from

St. Paul, (see Acts, xvi. 12.) who left St. Luke and Timothy to carry on the work. He afterwards paid them a second visit, Acts, xx. 6. and, it is probable, saw them afterwards a third time. This Epistle was sent at the same time with the preceding, in the year 62 or 63. The design of it is, to comfort the Philippians, under the concern that they had expressed for his imprisonment at Rome, to check a party-spirit which had crept in among them; and to promote, on the contrary, an entire union and harmony of affection;—to guard them against being seduced from the purity of the Christian faith by Judaizing teachers; to support them under the trials with which they struggled, and, above all, to inspire them with a concern to adorn their holy profession by the most eminent attainments in the divine life.

Ver. 1. *Paul and Timotheus,*] This and the following verse contain the inscription, or introduction of this Epistle. St. Paul might choose to join *Timothy* with him, as he not only had attended the Apostle in his general travels into these parts, but had assisted in preaching the gospel at Philippi. Comp. Acts, xvi. 1, 3, 12. Some have inquired why St. Paul does not stile himself an *Apostle* here, and in his two Epistles to the *Thessalonians*, and in that to *Philemon*, as he does in all the other Epistles which bear his name; and have accounted for it by observing, that no objection had been made to his character at Thessalonica or Philippi; and that, having received a present from them, he might not seem to be burdensome as an apostle of Christ. Perhaps it rather was, because *Timothy* and *Silas*, who were neither of them *apostles*, are joined with him here, and in the Epistles to the *Thessalonians*.

Ver. 3. *I thank my God*] From this verse to the 11th the Apostle acquaints the Philippians with the satisfaction that he had in them, and how much he thanked God upon their account, and what was the matter of his prayers to God for them. Instead of, *upon every remembrance of you*, Dr. Heylin reads, *as often as I make mention of you*: and he observes, that it was the custom, as well of the Jews as of the Christians, to name in their prayers those for whom they had a great regard. Others, however, understand the passage as referring to the kind remembrance which the Philippians had of St. Paul.

Ver. 4. *Always in every prayer, &c.*] It is not to be supposed

the first day until now ;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he ^b which hath begun a good work in you ^{*} will perform ^{it} until the day of Jesus Christ :

7 Even ¹ as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because [†] I have you ^k in my heart ; in as much as both ¹ in my bonds, and in the ^a defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are [‡] partakers of my grace.

8 For ^o God is my record, how ^o greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus

Christ.

9 And this I pray, ^o that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all ^{||} judgment ;

10 ^o That ye may [§] approve things that [¶] are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the ^o day of Christ ;

11 Being ^o filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

12 But I would ye should understand,

^a John, 6. 44, 45. & 16. 9—13. & 6. 29. 1 Thes. 1. 3. Eph. 2. 4—10. 1 Cor. 3. 9. Ezek. 36. 25—29. ^{*} Or will finish it. ¹ 1 Cor. 13. 7. 1 Thes. 5. 5. 2 Thes. 1. 5. Heb. 3. 1. & 6. 9, 10. [†] Or you have me in your heart. ^k 2 Cor. 3. 2. & 7. 3. 1 Thes. 2. 8. Ver. 8. ¹ See Eph. 3. 1. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. 2 Tim. 1. 8. & 4. 16. Heb. 13. 3. Ch. 4. 14. Ver. 5. ^o See ver. 17. [‡] Or partakers with me of grace. ^o Rom. 1. 9. & 9. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 23. & 11. 31. Gal. 1. 20. 2 Tim. 5. 21. & 4. 1. ^o Ch. 2. 24, 26. & 4. 1. Rom. 1. 9—12. 1 Thes. 2. 5. 2 Cor. 10. 1. Gal. 4. 19. ¹ 1 Thes. 3. 12. & 4. 9. & 5. 15. Prov. 4. 18. Eph. 1. 18. & 3. 17—19. ^{||} Or joyful. [¶] Rom. 2. 18. & 12. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 2—3. & 3. 13. Acts, 24. 14, 16. 1 Cor. 10. 32. 2 Cor. 1. 12. [§] Or try. [¶] Or differ. ^o Ver. 6. Acts, 17. 31. 2 Thes. 1. 7—10. 1 Thes. 4. 14—17. ^o John, 15. 4, 5, 8. Col. 1. 6, 9—11. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Eph. 5. 9. & 2. 10. & 1. 12. Phil. 4. 13. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Mat. 3. 16.

supposed that St. Paul never made any prayer, public or private, wherein he did not expressly mention the case of the *Philippians*: the meaning of the passage therefore only is, "Always in every prayer of mine, which I put up for you all, praying with joy ; which joy is on account of your fellowship, &c."

Ver. 5. For your fellowship, &c.] Your participation in the gospel: so Doddridge, and also Heylin, who observes that the meaning is, "the part you have in the gospel;—obeying its precepts, and profiting by the graces which accompany it." See 1 Cor. i. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 4. xiii. 13.

Ver. 6. Until the day of Jesus Christ:] See ver. 10. The Apostle speaks this from a judgment of charity, and from the consequent confidence that he had in them ; because, says he, it seems just, or fit for me to conceive this good hope of you, by reason of that great affection which you retain towards me, and your patience in enduring the like afflictions.

Ver. 7. Even as it is meet, &c.] As it is just in me to be thus affected towards you all ; because you have me in your hearts, both in my bonds, and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, being all partakers with me of its grace. Doddridge. Dr. Heylin renders the verse more paraphrastically thus ; And it is but just that I should have this opinion of you all ; being intimately conscious, as I am, of the interest which you take in the favour that God does me, with respect to my confinement, and the defence and confirmation of the gospel.

Ver. 8. God is my record, &c.] "God is my witness, that I long to see you with that peculiar tenderness of affection, which nothing but these bonds of mutual faith and love centering in him can be capable of producing ; and which greatly resemble the compassion which Christ himself feels for those whom his grace hath made the members of his body." Bowels is a term which denotes the most intense, ardent, and sincere affection. Dr. Heylin renders the verse, For God is my witness, that I love you all with a truly Christian affection.

Ver. 9. In knowledge, and in all judgment ;] The former

of these is explained of speculative, the latter of practical knowledge ; but the difference between the ideas suggested by the original would be much better preserved, by rendering the last word *διαφορῶν*, perception, or discernment. He wishes that they might not only know the principles which recommend candour and benevolence, but feel their influence on their hearts ; which daily experience and observation shew, in some great pretenders to this kind of knowledge, is a very different thing.

Ver. 10. That ye may approve, &c.] So as to prove things which differ:—"To prove by experience, and know by trial, how incomparably excellent the Christian character is beyond any other ; (see 1 Thes. v. 21.) that you may be found not only sincere and cordial, but altogether inoffensive through the whole of your Christian course, even until the great day of Christ." The word rendered without offence, is of doubtful signification. Sometimes it implies, "The not giving offence to others ;" 1 Cor. x. 32. But, considering the word sincere with which it is here joined, the Apostle's meaning rather seems to be, "that they might do nothing to offend themselves," to wound or grieve their own consciences, but might have ἀπερισκόπου συνείδησιν, a conscience void of offence. Acts, xxiv. 16.

Ver. 11. Being filled, &c.] "Being filled with all the genuine fruits and effects of righteousness, which are produced by virtue of a living faith in Jesus Christ."

Ver. 12. But I would ye should understand,] The Philippians, from the great affection they bore to St. Paul, being much concerned on account of his present sufferings, he labours, from this to the 26th verse, to abate their concern, by representing to them how useful his bonds had been to promote and spread the gospel ; how calm and easy he was under all his trouble, and how entirely resigned to the will and service of Christ ; and withal lets them know, that he was verily persuaded that he should be freed from his bonds,

brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me ' have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel ;

13 So that ^u my bonds * in Christ are manifest in all ^x the palace, and † in all other places ;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, ^y waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 ^z Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ; and some also ^a of goodwill :

16 ^b The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds :

17 But the other ^c of love, knowing that ' I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18 What then ? notwithstanding, every way, ^e whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached ; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 ^f For I know that this shall turn to my salvation ^g through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

¹ Pf. 76. 10. Exod. 18. 11. Rom. 8. 28. 2 Thes. 3. 1. ^u Eph. 3. 1. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. 2 Tim. 1. 8. & 4. 17. & 2. 9. Acts, xxviii. * Or for Christ. ^x Or Cæsar's Court. Ch. 4. 22. † Or to all others. ^y Eph. 3. 13. 1 Thes. 3. 3. If. 41. 10, 14. & 43. 2. Eph. 6. 19, 20. ^z Ch. 3. 2, 18, 19. Gal. 1. 7. & 2. 4. & 5. 8, 12. & 6. 12. Eccl. 4. 4. James, 4. 5. Ver. 16. ^a 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 1, 2. Pf. 40. 9, 10. ^b Hof. 10. 1. Mic. 7. 2. 4. Ver. 15. ^c If. 52. 8. Pf. 40. 9, 10. & 45. If. 5. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 20. ^d 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. Rom. 1. 16, 17. ^e 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 17. & 10. 9, 11. ^f Ver. 14—17. Mat. 21. 16. ^g Rom. 8. 28. ^h 2 Cor. 4. 17. Pf. 76. 10. Job, 13. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 7, 9. ⁱ 2 Cor. 1. 11. Rom. 8. 9, 26.

bonds, and have another joyful opportunity of visiting them.

Ver. 13. *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest*] “ So that my bonds in or for Christ are manifested and taken notice of in all the palace of Cæsar, and all other places in and about the city ; and have seemed so remarkable, that many have been excited to inquire, much to their own satisfaction and advantage, what there was in this new and unknown religion, which could animate me so cheerfully to endure hardships and persecution in its defence ; for they soon traced up my sufferings to this, as their only cause.” Mr. Peirce would render this verse, *So that it is manifest, both in the Pretorium and elsewhere, that my bonds are for Christ ;* that is, “ that I suffer only for the sake of Christianity, and not for any real crime.” And Dr. Heylin gives nearly the same interpretation :—*So that my imprisonment for the sake of Christ is now publicly known at the court, and in all other places.*

Ver. 14. *Waxing confident by my bonds, &c.*] *Encouraged by my bonds, preach the word with greater freedom and intrepidity.*

Ver. 15. *Some indeed preach Christ, &c.*] It is very proper here to inquire who these preachers were, the rightly stating of which may give some light to this Epistle. There can be no doubt that they must have been professed converts to the Christian religion ; for no unconverted Jews or Gentiles would ever give themselves the trouble to preach Christ ; and in all probability these preachers must have been converts from Judaism ; for, first, by comparing what St. Paul says in his other Epistles, it appears, that the greatest opposition, disturbance, or hindrance that he met with from any who professed themselves Christians, was from them : nor could he, indeed, well be opposed by any others but Jewish converts, or such as were seduced by, and fell in with them. Secondly, who besides these were likely to endeavour to add affliction to St. Paul's bonds ?—He continually represents the cause of his bonds to be his preaching and asserting the liberty of the Gentiles. Now

they who were most displeased with that conduct which brought his sufferings upon him, were likely enough to be most forward in endeavouring to aggravate his trouble under them ;—and who could they be but the Jewish converts ?

Ver. 16. *Not sincerely,*] This may refer to the matter of their preaching : it was not sincere, pure, and uncorrupted gospel ; but they adulterated it, by mixing Judaism with it ; and so they perverted the gospel of Christ. Gal. i. 7. Or it may refer to the intentions of the preachers : they acted not sincerely in what they did ; but while they pretended their great end was to preach Christ, instead of that they made it their chief business to preach down the Apostle, and to lessen his reputation. The next words seem to support the latter sense, as does what he says in ver. 18. See the Introduction to this chapter.

Ver. 17. *I am set, &c.*] Some would render the word *κείμενος*, I lie, that is to say, in bonds for the gospel, in order to make an apology for it before Nero ; and this they think a more moving consideration, and one which would sooner excite love and tenderness, than what is expressed in our translation ;—that he was set, called, raised up, for the defence of the gospel. Heylin renders it, *Knowing that I am reduced to this state, for the defence of the gospel.*

Ver. 19. *This shall turn to my salvation*] *My deliverance* : Peirce ; who thinks, that as they who preached Christ out of love, made more friends for the Apostle, so they who preached him out of envy, gave his friends an opportunity of representing his persecutors as proceeding upon principles of malice. But, as such an event could scarcely be said to proceed from the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, by salvation may be meant the Apostle's eternal happiness ; and his persuasion might be, that all the designs of his adversaries against him should be so over-ruled, that through the supplies of the Holy Spirit, all should work together for good ; and his eternal salvation be advanced thereby through the concurrence and assistance of their prayers.

Ver.

20 ^b According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, ¹ so now also Christ shall be magnified, in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

21 ^k For ^l to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

22 But ^m if I live in the flesh, ⁿ this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, ^o having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless ^r to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that ^s I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and ^t joy of faith;

26 ^u That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

27 Only ^v let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that ^w whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ^x ye stand fast in one

^a 2 Tim. 1. 12. Rom. 5. 5. Gal. 6. 14. ^b Acts, 20. 24. & 21. 13. ^c 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. ^d Gal. 2. 20. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Col. 2. 10. & 3. 11. Gal. 6. 14. Pf. 73. 26. ^e Or to melting and dying, Christ is said. Ch. 3. 7-9. ^f Gal. 2. 20. 2 Cor. 10. 3 not Rom. 8. 1, 4, 13. ^g Ver. 21. Acts, 20. 24. & 21. 13. ^h 2 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 6, 8. Luke, 23. 43. ⁱ 1 Thes. 4. 17. John, 17. 24. ^j Acts, 20. 29. ^k Ch. 2. 24. ^l 2 Cor. 1. 24. Rom. 1. 11, 12. & 5. 32. Philem. 22. ^m 1 Pet. 1. 8. ⁿ 2 Chr. 20. 20. Pf. 60. 6. Jer. 15. 16. ^o 2 Cor. 1. 14. & 5. 12. Ch. 2. 16-18. Rom. 1. 11. 12. ^p Eph. 4. 15, 3. ^q Col. 1. 10. ^r 1 Thes. 2. 11, 12. & 4. 15, 7. ^s 1 Cor. 7. 19, 20, 24. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 14. & 3. 8, 14. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Pet. 1. 4-9. 2 Cor. 7. 1. ^t Ver. 19-26. & 2. 24. Philem. 22. ^u Pf. 133. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 10. Ch. 2. 2, 14, 16. & 3. 15-17. & 4. 1, 2. Jude, 3. Eph. 4. 3. Prov. 23. 23.

Ver. 20. *With all boldness,*] *With all openness,* or *in the most public manner.* See John, vii. 4.

Ver. 21. *To me to live is Christ,* &c.] “He is the supreme end of life, and I value it only as it is capable of being referred to the purposes of his honour; and, in consequence of that, *to die is gain*: for as that temper argues my interest in the friendship of that Redeemer, who is the Lord of the invisible, as well as the visible world, I am well satisfied that he will make ample provision for my happiness, when I quit this transitory life, and surround me with far more important blessings than any which I must then resign. Nor is the utility of my death confined to this; it may be instrumental towards gaining others over to the religion of Christ; so that, in all cases, whether I respect the honour of Christ, or, my own eternal condition, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” Mr. Pierce would render this, *For Christ is gain to me, living or dying.*

Ver. 22. *But if I live in the flesh,*] “But if my lot should be to live longer in the flesh, this magnifying, or serving of Christ will be the fruit of my labour, &c.” There seems to be something emphatic in the Apostle’s manner of expressing himself, in this and the 24th verse. It appears to be his intention to shew the little value that he set upon life for its own sake, and therefore to speak of it by way of contempt and disparagement: as if he had said, “If I must yet live longer in this painful, miserable flesh.” He thought life valuable and important, considered with respect to Christ and his service, as he had spoken of it before; but by this variation of his style, or his adding *in the flesh*, he may be understood to hint, that he was not fond of life as men commonly are. Instead of, *I wot not*, read *I know not*.

Ver. 23. *For I am in a strait,* &c.] “For I am, as it were, borne two different ways; having on the one hand a more earnest desire, out of regard to my own immediate happiness, to be unbound, to weigh anchor, and, quitting these mortal shores, to set sail for that happy world,

“where I shall be immediately with Christ;—which is better beyond all comparison and expression, with regard to my own private happiness.” The original is very emphatic; and seems to be an allusion to a ship stationed at a particular place, and riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds: which gives us a lively representation of the Apostle’s attachment to his situation in the Christian church, and the vehemency of his desire to weigh anchor, and set sail for the heavenly country, that he might *be with Christ*—an expression, which plainly proves that the separate spirits of good men are with Christ in such a manner, as that their state is *far better* than while they continue in this present world, which a state of *insensibility* cannot possibly be; though this does not tend at all to disprove that accession of happiness after the resurrection, which other scriptures plainly declare. See 2 Cor. v. 5—10. The original of what we render *far better*, is so very emphatical, that it cannot be translated literally. *Better beyond all expression*, in some measure gives the sense; for indeed the Apostle seems to labour here for expression as much as in any part of his writings.

Ver. 25. *I know that I shall abide,* &c.] “I am persuaded that I shall live yet longer, and have an opportunity of visiting you all.” Probably the Apostle had some particular revelation whereupon to ground his confidence. It is not by any means to be imagined that he refers to intimations from the palace how it should go with him. He must have known little of princes and courtiers, especially in Nero’s reign, to build so confidently on such a foundation. Dr. Heylin, upon the last words, *joy of faith*, observes, that the preaching of an apostle never fails of producing actual faith in minds disposed like those of the Philippians; and experience teaches that such faith is accompanied with joyous sensations. It is luminous, and fills the soul with a delectable relish of truth. Hence *joy in believing*, &c.

Ver. 27.] From this verse to ch. ii. 18. St. Paul presses

spirit, with one mind striving together for the
faith of the gospel ;

28 And ^c in nothing terrified by your adver-
saries: which is to them an ^a evident token of per-
dition, but to you ^b of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you ^c it is given in the behalf
of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also
to suffer for his sake ;

30 Having the same conflict ^d which ye saw
in me, *and now hear to be in me.*

^a Acts, 24. 207. Rom. 7. 5. & 10. 8. Gal. 7. 23, 25 & 1. 23 & 3. 2. Eph. 4. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 19. & 3. 9. & 4. 1, 6. & 5. 8, 12. & 6. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 7.
Tit. 1. 1. ^b If 41. 10, 14. & 43. 2. & 51. 7. 12. Mat. 10. 28. Heb. 13. 5, 6. with Ch. 7. 2, 18. ^c 1 Thes. 1. 5, 6. ^d Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim.
2. 11, 12. 2 Cor. 1. 10. ^e If 53. 10—12. Pf. 22. 27—30. Acts, 5. 41. 1 Pet. 3. 14. ^f Acts, 16. 19—40. Ver. 13. Acts, 14. 22. &
20. 23. 2 Tim. 3. 11, 12.

upon the Philippians a perseverance and unanimity in the
faith which he had taught them, notwithstanding the oppo-
sition that they met with on account of it ; and withal, he
urges them to be peaceable, and condescending to one
another, and ready to perform all mutual good offices.
This he enforces by various affecting considerations, and
particularly that of the condescension of Christ, and his
blessed reward ; which he speaks of in very strong and
lively terms.

There can be no doubt, that *having their conversation
worthy of the gospel of Christ*, imports in general their living
according to the direction of the gospel, and answerably to
the great favour vouchsafed them. See Ephes. iv. 1.
Col. i. 10. 1 Thes. ii. 12. iv. 1. But the latter part of this
verse, together with the next, shews what he had here prin-
cipally in view ; namely, their continuing steadfast in the
doctrine that he had taught them, concerning the liberty
which God had granted them as Gentiles. The word ren-
dered, *Let your conversation be*, signifies literally, “ to be-
have as denizens of some city or corporation.”

Ver. 28. *In nothing terrified, &c.*] It evidently appears
hence, and from several other passages in this Epistle, that
the Philippians were now in a suffering state : which is a
circumstance to be borne in mind as we go on, as it illus-
trates several masterly strokes in the Apostle's address to
them. “ I suppose,” says Dr. Heylin, “ that the word
“ *ἥτις*, which, in this verse, refers to *πίστις τῆς εὐαγγελίας*, the
“ *faith of the gospel*, in the verse above ; and that the sense
“ is the same as in Rom. i. 18. where it is said, that in
“ the gospel the wrath of God is revealed against all impiety
“ and injustice of men, &c. Wherever the gospel is
“ preached, it is no indifferent thing, even to those who do
“ not receive it ; because it is a warning to them from God,
“ of the danger they incur by disobedience.” See on
Ephes. i. 15.

Ver. 29. *For unto you it is given, &c.*] *For it is granted to
you as a favour, on the part of Christ.* Doddridge, Heylin,
&c. St. Paul very skillfully diverts them from viewing per-
secution under its most frightful appearance, and leads
them to consider it as a gift and an honour conferred upon
them. We may observe the like in the discourse of another
apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 12—16. Some would read from the
words in ver. 28. *which is to them, &c.* to the end of the
present verse, in a parenthesis, and connect the 30th with
the former part of the 28th verse. See the original.

Ver. 30. *Having the same conflict, &c.*] “ *Having, in a
“ great measure, the same struggle with the adversaries of
“ the gospel, who labour to overbear it by brutal violence,
“ — as ye saw to be in me, when I was among you in Philippi,
“ and was stripped, and scourged, and laid in the dungeon,
“ and in the stocks ; and which you now hear to be in me at*

“ Rome, whither you know I have been sent in bonds, as
“ an evil-doer ; having been obliged to appeal unto Cæsar,
“ for the preservation of my life.” See Acts, xvi. 19. &c.

Inferences.—Amid the numberless mercies, with which,
through the indulgence of our heavenly Father, we are
daily surrounded, what can demand our humble and
grateful acknowledgments more than our participation of
the gospel ? To whatever afflictions it may expose us, or
whatever we may be called to sacrifice to its interests, every
day, in which we share its comforts and supports, calls
aloud for our praises, both in the enjoyment and in the re-
collection. No wonder, therefore, that where this blessed
work is begun, there is a great affection between those
who were the instruments of producing it, and those in
whom it is produced. No wonder if St. Paul made men-
tion of these his Christian converts at Philippi, in his
prayers, offering up requests for them, and praying for the
increase of their hope and love. No wonder, on the other
side, if their hearts were tenderly set upon him, and that,
distant as he was, he seemed to lodge there, and their
tender care followed him through every circumstance of
his bonds ; so that his sufferings and dangers were even
more painful to them than their own : while he, on his
part, longed for them all in the bowels of the Lord, and
could conceive of no greater charm in liberty itself, than
that it might give him opportunity of cultivating so en-
dearing a friendship by personal intercourse.

The increase of love founded on knowledge, and at-
tended with other sentiments of experimental religion, is
to be numbered among the best of apostolic blessings. Every
experience of these things will confirm our resolution of
maintaining that godly sincerity, which will render our
conversation unblameable, and our account in the day of
the Lord comfortable. To glorify God by the fruits of
righteousness, is the great end for which these rational na-
tures were given us ; and it is by the exercise of lively
faith in Christ that these dispositions are cultivated, and
these fruits rendered most abundant.

Again. How admirable is the conduct of Divine Pro-
vidence ! and in how beautiful a manner does it often work
the purposes which it wisely and graciously determines, by
events that seem to have the most contrary tendency !
Who would have imagined that the imprisonment of St.
Paul would have been effectual to the advancement of
Christianity ! Thus can God animate and encourage his
servants, by the extremity which their brethren suffer in
his cause, so that they shall wax confident by their bonds
and their martyrdom. Let this then reconcile us to all the
allotments of Providence, and establish us in an earnest
expectation and hope that Christ will be glorified in all
things

CHAP. II.

He exhorteth them to unity, and to all humbleness of mind, by the example of Christ's humility and exaltation: to a careful proceeding in the way of salvation; that they be as lights to the wicked world, and comforts to him their Apostle, who is now ready to be offered up to God: he hopeth to send Timothy to them, whom he greatly commendeth, as Epaphroditus also, whom he presently sendeth to them.

[Anno Domini 62.]

IF there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fel-

lowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things,

* Ch. 1. 30. Rom. 5. 1-5, 11. & 15. 9-13. 2 Cor. 1. 3-7. & 10. 1. & 2. 14. & 6. 10. Col. 2. 2. 1 Thes. 1. 5, 6. 2 Thes. 1. 3. & 2. 16, 17. & 3. 5. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Col. 3. 12-14. 1 Thes. 3. 7-9. Ch. 1. 26. John. 3. 29. Acts, 4. 32. Rom. 12. 10, 16. & 15. 5, 6. 1 Cor. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Ch. 1. 27. & 3. 15, 16. & 4. 2. 1 Pet. 3. 8. Ver. 14. Ch. 1. 15, 16. Gal. 5. 15, 26. Jam. 4. 1, 6, 16, &c. 3. 14-16. 2 Cor. 12. 20. Rom. 12. 10. 1 Cor. 15. 9. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Ep. 5. 21. Luke, 14. 10, 11. & 18. 14. Rom. 12. 15. & 15. 1, 2, 3. 1 Cor. 10. 24, 33. & 13. 5. 2 Cor. 11. 23, 27. Heb. 13. 1-3.

things by us, whether by our life or death: and who, that knows the grace of God in truth, would not rejoice even in death itself, if the gracious Redeemer, who gave his own life for us, may thereby be magnified?

But how execrable was the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and managed a ministry which should have breathed nothing but love, in a view of adding affliction to those bonds which oppressed this holy, this excellent man! But generous and amiable is the disposition which the Apostle expresses, when he rejoices in this—that Christ was preached, though the purposes with regard to himself were so unkind! These are the wonders which the love of Jesus produces in the soul; thus does it empty us of every malignant passion, and reconcile us to the most disagreeable events which may advance his interests. Where such principles inspire the breast, the faithful servants of Jesus will find their own account, while they are wholly intent on his honour. But let it be remembered, that it is through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which sanctifies to the faithful every circumstance through which they pass, that all these events are so blessed unto them. That these supplies may be imparted, let us unite our prayers in favour of all who love our common Lord in sincerity.

Again. How happy must that man be, who can truly say, that to him to live is Christ, and to die is gain! What a blessed alternative is before him, and how cheerfully may he leave it to Providence to decide which of the two shall be appointed for him! And yet, how vain must life be, and how miserable death, to that man who cannot say it! He that gathereth not with Christ scattereth abroad (Matt. xiii. 30.); and when death comes to such a one, it is the loss of all, and attended with the final, and, alas! the eternal loss of himself: while the good man pronounces it better, beyond all comparison, to depart, that he may be with Christ, and submits only to continue in life, as the part in which self-denying duty requires him to acquiesce. But O! how unworthy the Christian character is it, to be adverse to so advantageous a remove!—to be unwilling, and that even on such terms, to depart and to be with Christ! as if any converse, any friendship, any enjoyment, any hope here, were comparable; yea, as if it were preferable to serving him in his

immediate service, under the everlasting tokens of his acceptance and delight.

But if that Master, whom we have the honour to serve, determine to us an abode here for months and years to come, and his church may receive advantage by it, ill shall we requite his love, if we are unwilling for a while to wait till he shall call us up to himself. Very deficient shall we be in that gratitude and zeal which we owe him, if we find not something of a heaven begun even here below, in doing what may be pleasing to him, in managing his interests, with such degrees of ability as he shall be pleased to honour us with, and so training up others to a meetness for those enjoyments which he has taught us by his grace to expect and pursue.

Whatever our stations may be, whether in public or private life, let it be our care, in every circumstance and relation, that our conversation may be as becometh the gospel; that we may adorn so holy a profession, and answer so glorious a hope. If opposition arise, let it not terrify us. It will, if well supported, be a token of salvation, and that of God. Let us account it an honour, and the gift of the Divine favour to us, to be called and strengthened to suffer for his sake. So were the prophets, so were the apostles, dignified. We have heard of their noble contentions, that we might emulate them: and well may we do it, since we have the same Author and Support of our faith, and hope to partake of the same exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The apostolical inscription and benediction open the epistle. Paul, and Timotheus who joins him in all cordial salutations, the servants of Jesus Christ in the gospel, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, brought into real union with him in faith and holiness, with the bishops and deacons, the superior officers in the church: grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Note, (1.) There can be no true peace but what flows from divine grace and favour. (2.) Every covenant mercy that we receive at God's hands, comes to true believers as the fruit of our adored Redeemer's undertaking.

2dly, The Apostle, after his gracious introduction, begins,

but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also

in Christ Jesus :

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought

¹ Mar. 11. 29. John, 13. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 21. 1 John, 2. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 17. & 12. 13. ² 11. 9. 6. Zech. 13. 7. John, 1. 1, 2. & 5. 18. & 10. 30. 33. & 17. 3. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Col. 1. 15. Heb. 1. 3. Rom. 9. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 17. & 3. 16. Tit. 2. 13. Heb. 7. 25, 26, 28.

1. With thanksgivings to God on their behalf. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you*, and of the rich grace that he has bestowed upon you, (*always, in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, delighting in and over you*) for your fellowship in the gospel, thankful for all the inestimable privileges to which you have been admitted, for the love and union maintained among you, and for your liberality in contributing to the furtherance of the gospel; *from the first day until now*, with steadfastness and perseverance, in the midst of all opposition, continuing to approve your fidelity. *Note* (1.) It is a great joy to a minister's soul, when his people walk steadily in the fellowship of the gospel. (2.) Our grateful thanksgivings are ever due, while we are mentioning the divine mercies.

2. He expresses his confidence concerning them—*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you*, by his divine grace converting your souls, *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*, will do every thing on his part, consistent with the harmony of his divine perfections, for your present and eternal salvation; and I indulge a humble hope and confidence, from your past conduct and present experience, and probable fidelity in future, that you will be kept by him unto the day of his appearing. *Note*, Whatever good is found in us, comes from God, in and through Jesus Christ; and he must have all the glory.

3. He gives the reason for that confidence in them which he entertained—*Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all*, bound in the judgment of charity to esteem the whole church, and every member true to their profession. And I the more readily entertain such a persuasion of you, *because I have you in my heart*, embraced with my warmest affections, and sharing my constant remembrances, *inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace*, enduring the like tribulations as I suffer; and by your sympathy with me, and your readiness to assist me, both in my bonds, and amidst all the opposition which I meet with in defence of the gospel, ye manifestly appear to have received out of the same Redeemer's fulness. *Note*, We are bound to think well of those who, not only make a creditable profession, but dare to suffer for the truth themselves, or nobly own, even in bonds, those who do.

4. He appeals to God for the warm attachment of his heart unto them. *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ*, with the truest spiritual affection, like that which Jesus himself feels for precious souls.

5. He tells them what were his prayers for them. *And this I pray*, (1.) *That your love may abound yet more and more towards God and one another*. (2.) *That ye may advance in knowledge and in all judgment*, grounded and settled in the true principles of the gospel; and that thus your love may be increased day by day. (3.) *That ye may approve the things that are excellent*, bringing every thing to the test of

God's word, that their different excellencies may be ascertained; and examining by this unerring rule the doctrines of seducers, that the purity of the gospel may be maintained, in opposition to their errors. (4.) *That ye may be sincere, and without offence, or allowed guile, before God and man, true to your principles, and upright in your conduct, till the day of Christ*, persevering in your fidelity, and waiting as those who constantly eye a heart-searching God and a judgment-day. (5.) *Being thus found faithful, you will be filled with the fruits of righteousness*, with every divine temper and gracious work which the Spirit of God produces in the faithful, and *which are by Jesus Christ*, accepted through him, as well as derived from him, *unto the glory and praise of God*. His own glory is the great end which he proposes in all his works, and which we therefore should ever regard as the great end of our being.

3dly, Nothing could tend more gloriously to remove the ignominy of St. Paul's chain, or to comfort the hearts of his spiritual children, who might be much dejected at his reproaches and sufferings, than the account which he gives of himself.

1. Even in his bonds the gospel was not bound, *but his sufferings tended to confirm and propagate the knowledge of the truth*. *I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me*, dark and afflictive as the dispensation might appear to you, *have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel*; for God can easily bring the greatest good out of what appeared the greatest evil. Thus the blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the church. *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace*, where my sufferings for the gospel, and patient fortitude under them, are known to all the great men of Nero's court, *and in all other places*, and are made the happy occasion of raising inquiries about the gospel in those who might not otherwise have heard it, and of bringing some under the joyful sound even out of Cæsar's household. *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds*, and fully satisfied of the goodness of the cause, and of the hand of the Lord visible in the support that he gives me, *are much more bold than ever to speak the word without fear*, and to proclaim the salvation which is only to be found in a crucified Jesus. *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife*, taking this opportunity of my imprisonment to pursue the base end of setting up themselves; even under the covert of zeal for the gospel, envying my reputation, and hoping to supplant me in the affection of the churches, *and some also of good-will*, with hearty affection to the cause, and true regard for me. *The one preach Christ of contention*, out of mere pride and rivalry; *not sincerely*, from a right principle of love unfeigned; but from envy, *supposing to add affliction to my bonds*, by ingratiating themselves, to my prejudice, with the members of the churches, or hoping to incense the government more against me by the noise that they make, and the divisions they seek to raise: *but the other preach Christ*

it not robbery to be equal with God :

7 But made himself of ^b no reputation, and

took upon him ¹ the form of a servant, and

² was made in the ^{*} likeness of men :

^a Pf. 22. 6. If. 49. 7. & 53. 2, 3. Dan. 9. 24. Mark, 9. 12. 2 Cor. 8. 9. Mat. 3. 20. Pf. 40. 17. & 53. 11. Ezek. 34. 23, 24. Zech. 7. 8. Mat. 20. 28. Luke, 22. 27. John, 13. 14. Rom. 15. 3, 8.

^b If. 42. 1. & 49. 3, 6, 7. & 52. 13. ^{*} Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 8. 3. & 1. 3. John, 1. 14. Heb. 2. 14, 17. Mat. 1. Luke, 2. ¹ Or *habit*.

of love, truly attached to the Saviour, and longing to promote the salvation of immortal souls; knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel, and suffered to bear these bonds on purpose to have an opportunity, before the highest in this world, publicly to vindicate and defend the cause of Christ. *Note*, (1.) Strange as it may appear, that any should preach Christ out of envy, so subtle is the Tempter, and so corrupt the heart of man, that even the gospel may be turned into the gall of asps, and made the pedestal on which the proud heart would erect its reputation. (2.) Faithful souls are whetted by opposition, and made more bold by bonds and reproaches.

2. He expresses the joy that he felt in his own soul, amidst all he suffered from open enemies and false friends. *What then?* though some act on principles so base, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice: if his name is spread abroad, and his gospel propagated, that is matter of real joy; and the ministry may be blest, though the preacher perishes. *For I know that this shall turn to my salvation*, however different the designs of these men may be; and serve to procure my liberty the sooner, as well as to advance my soul's present and eternal benefit, through your prayer daily offered up for me, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which can enable me to improve under every dispensation, and cause it to work for good—according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that I shall be supported and delivered, and that in nothing I shall be ashamed of that glorious cause for which I suffer; but that with all boldness, and unshaken fortitude of mind, as always hitherto I have been enabled to act, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; by longer patient suffering, if such be his will; by a faithful discharge of my trust, should I regain my liberty; or by sealing the testimony with my blood, if his glory so require. *Note*, (1.) We are much indebted to our brethren's prayers. (2.) The supply of the Spirit of Christ can make up all other wants, and cause every providence to prove a blessing. (3.) If we are not a shame to the gospel, we need never be ashamed of it, though devoted, for the sake thereof, to the most ignominious death.

4thly, The Apostle was happy to die, yet, for their sakes, content to live.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain; living or dying, he is to me all and in all; for his glory I only desire to live; and in whatever way I die in his cause and service, I know it shall prove my everlasting gain. *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour*, to preach and suffer for the truth's sake, in order to advance my great Master's cause: yet what I shall choose, I wot not, whether life or death: for I am in a strait betwixt two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, longing for the heavenly blessedness in store, and to see him face to face, where sorrow and sighing shall be for ever done away; which is

far better than any possible situation that I can be in here below: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and for your benefit I can gladly forego, for a while, my own happiness, and conflict still amid the opposing powers of earth and hell. *And having this confidence*, that my abode below will be for your edification, I know, by divine intimations, that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith, to confirm and establish you yet more and more; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again, restored to liberty, and enabled to resume my useful labours among you. *Note*, (1.) If we can say with truth, to live is Christ, that his glory is our single aim, we may confidently add, to die is gain; how great, heaven only can tell! (2.) But for one thing can earth be truly desirable to the faithful Christian, and that is the service which can be rendered to immortal souls, and the glory accruing thence to the Redeemer; for this therefore he lives.

5thly, The Apostle closes with two exhortations.

1. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ* (συνίεσθε.) Behave as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, walk worthy of your high vocation, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and proving the solidity of your hope by the spirituality of your conduct; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, with joy, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, united in truth and love; resisting, with the most vigorous efforts, every persecuting or seducing foe; holding fast the unadulterated principles of grace, and building up each other on your most holy faith. *Note*, (1.) The faith of the gospel will ever meet with opposition, till the great Millennium. (2.) Unanimity among Christians is the great means of their establishment; while dissention and schism render them an easy prey.

2. *In nothing terrified by your adversaries*, however many or mighty, whether from earth or hell; but defy their malice and rage, cleaving unshaken to the gospel; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God; such patient and faithful suffering for the truth proves your interest in it; while the opposition of your foes must end in their eternal ruin. *For unto you it is given*, as your distinguished honour, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, to the conversion and sanctification of your souls, which is a most eminent gift of God, but also to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, when I was with you, and steadily sustained the shock; and now bear to be in me. *Note*, (1.) Faith is the gift of God, but always ready to be bestowed upon the penitent. (2.) Sufferings and reproaches, on the behalf of Christ, are real honours. (3.) It is an encouragement to us patiently to endure the cross, when we see others cheerfully bearing it before us, and glorying in tribulation.

8 And being found in fashion as a man, ¹ death, even the death of the cross.
 he humbled himself, and became obedient unto ⁹ Wherefore God also ^m hath highly exalt-

¹ Heb. 5. 7, 8. & 2. 9, 14, 17. & 4. 15. & 9. 14. & 10. 10, 14. & 12. 2. John, 10. 18. & 18. 11. Mat. 26. 39, 42. & xxvii. Luke, xxii. ^m Pf. viii. xviii. xxi. xlv. lxxiii. xcvi.—c. cxlii. cx. John, 17. 1, 2, 5. & 5. 27. & 10. 17. Rom. 14. 9. Heb. 2. 9. Rev. 5. 12.

CHAP. II.

THE Apostle in the preceding chapter having exhorted the Philippians to walk worthy of their Christian profession, by maintaining the faith of the gospel, and by living in concord with one another, he, in the beginning of this chapter, besought them all, by every thing most affecting in the Christian religion, to complete his joy, ver. 1. by being alike disposed to maintain the faith of the gospel, and by cultivating the same mutual love, and by minding one thing, namely, the promoting the honour of Christ, ver. 2. And for that purpose he counselled them in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, to avoid strife and vain-glory, and to cultivate a humble disinterested temper of mind, ver. 3, 4.—after the example of Christ, ver. 5.—who, though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, ver. 6.—apparently and in some sense divested himself of these honours, and took the form of a servant, by becoming man, ver. 7. In which state he humbled himself still farther, by suffering death, even the death of the cross, for the salvation of the world, ver. 8.—But on that account, God hath exalted him in the human nature, to the dignity of *Saviour, Prophet, Priest, King, and glorified Head* of the church, which is above every dignity possessed by angels in heaven, or by men upon earth, ver. 9.—and in the same nature hath exalted him to the office of *Lord* or governor over every thing in heaven, and earth, and hell, ver. 10.—to the glory of God the Father, ver. 11.

After proposing this great example of humility, obedience, and reward, the Apostle very properly exhorted the Philippians to work out their own salvation, by imitating Christ's humility and obedience, ver. 12.—not discouraged by the difficulty of the undertaking, because God worketh in believers both to will and to work of his good pleasure, ver. 13.—Then he mentioned certain duties, to which the Philippians were to be especially attentive, ver. 14—16.—assuring them, if it were necessary for the perfecting of their faith and holiness, that he was willing to die for them, ver. 17, 18.

Next he informed them, that he hoped to be able to send Timothy to them soon, who by bringing back word of their perseverance in the faith, and of their progress in holiness, would comfort him in his bonds, ver. 19—23.—and that he was firmly persuaded he should come himself to them, ver. 24.—In the mean time, he judged it necessary to send Epaphroditus with this letter, ver. 25.—Because he longed to see them, being grieved that they had heard of his sickness, ver. 26.—of which the Apostle gave them a particular account, ver. 27.—and told them that he had dismissed Epaphroditus, as soon as he was fit for the journey, that they might rejoice on seeing him again, ver. 28.—Having thus apologized for their pastor's long absence, the Apostle exhorted the Philippians to receive him with joy, and to esteem him highly, ver. 29.—on account of the zeal and diligence that he had shewn in the work of the gospel, and in ministering to the Apostle's necessities, ver. 30.

Ver. 1. If—therefore] This *therefore* seems to have a reference to what he had before declared, ch. i. 25, 26. of his willingness to continue yet longer in the flesh for their sakes; and the connection will stand thus: “I am contented, as you may perceive, by what I have said, to abide longer in this wearisome and afflicted estate, and to be kept from that happiness on which I have fixed my most earnest expectation and desire; and the reason why I am easy to continue thus here, is, that I may be serviceable to you, in improving your faith, and promoting your joy; and since such is my affection to you, do you make me a suitable return; and therefore take care to comply with the exhortation I give you, that you may be a comfort and a joy to me.” The word *παράκλησις* is used sometimes to signify *exhortation*, and sometimes *consolation*; and where the context does not determine the sense it is doubtful which way it should be understood. If it be taken in the former signification, the meaning is, *If a Christian exhortation be of any weight with you*; if in the latter, the meaning is, *If Christianity affords any consolation*.

Ver. 2. Fulfil ye my joy,] He had told them, ch. i. 25. that his coming again to them would be for the promotion of the joy of their faith: now in these words he demands of them a suitable return; and that they would by their behaviour promote his joy. See Rom. i. 11, 12. Dr. Doddridge translates the remaining part of this verse as follows: *That ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love; having your souls joined together, in attending to the one great thing*.

Ver. 3. In lowliness of mind, &c.] Though Christians of eminent gifts and graces may, and cannot but account their attainments to be superior to others of the lowest class, as the Apostle speaks of his own gifts and labours; yet, like him, they ought to be humble in ascribing no glory to themselves, but all to the grace of God (compare 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. and 2 Cor. xii. 11.). And, with respect to true religion, love should teach them to hope that there may be something abundantly more excellent in the hearts of other believers than they find in their own, who, on one account or another, are apt to think their own worse than others; because, the more they know themselves, the more they see of the defects of their own hearts—more than it is possible for them to see of the hearts of others whose conversation is such as becomes the gospel of Christ. See Matth. xx. 26—28. and compare Rom. xii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 5. The Apostle in the former verse exhorts the Philippians to be at peace and unity among themselves: in this, like a wise physician, he searches to the bottom of the evil which he would cure; and well knowing that pride and vain-glory are the perpetual sources of strife and contention, he exhorts them to fly from those evils, presses them to lowliness of mind, and admonishes them not to overvalue themselves, nor undervalue others; but to practise humility towards each other.

Ver. 4. Look not every man, &c.] “Let no one among you be only solicitous for his own profit; but let every one desire, and, as he has opportunity, further the profit of others.” See ver. 21.

Ver.

ed him, and given him " a name which is above every name :

10 ° That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in

° Pf. 23. 27—31. & 72. 17. & 89. 27. Dan. 7. 14. Heb. 1. 4. Eph. 1. 21. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Col. 2. 10. Mat. 28. 18. ° If. 45. 23. & 53. 12. Rom. 14. 10, 11. Heb. 1. 6. Rev. 5. 13.

Ver. 5. *Let this mind be in you,] For the same temper of mind ought to be in you which was in Christ Jesus.* Heylin. To support his doctrine, and to enforce obedience to it, the Apostle sets before the Philippians the example of Christ, and in lively colours represents his great humility : he shews them how much he descended below himself for their sakes ; how infinitely great he was, and how truly low he made himself ; by nature, how much higher than the highest ; by choice, how much lower than the lowest. It should be observed, that, in the succeeding verses, the Apostle points out to us three different states and conditions of Christ : the first is his state of infinite dignity, from which, in some sense, he descended, expressed in the words, *Who being in the form of God,* ver. 6. The second is, the state of humility to which he descended, in these words, *He made himself of no reputation,* ver. 7. The third is, the glory and exaltation of his human nature, intimated in those words, *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him,* ver. 9. These three states and conditions of Christ are essential to the Apostle's argument ; for take away any one of them, and the example which the Apostle would propose is lost. For instance, if you remove the first state, that of his natural and infinite dignity and excellence, the second state will be no longer a state of humiliation, nor Christ any longer an example of humility : for if he was not better than a servant before he was a servant, his being a servant was his lot and condition, not his choice ; it would have been owing to the order of nature and providence, and not to his humility ; and he would have been no more humble in being born to be a servant, than others who are born to the same state. It is implied in the argument, that he was in possession of whatever belonged to his state of dignity and excellence, before he underwent any thing that belonged to his state of humiliation. For his voluntarily descending, in some sense, from his dignity to a lower and meaner condition, is the very act and real ground and foundation of his humility. It is likewise necessarily implied in the argument, that he underwent whatever belonged to his state of humiliation, before he enjoyed any thing that belonged to the state of exaltation of his glorified humanity ; because his exaltation was the effect and reward of his humility ; and being purchased and obtained by his humility, it could not be antecedent to it. Consequently, it necessarily follows, that his natural state of infinite dignity, and his acquired state of exaltation, are two perfectly different states ; since one was evidently antecedent to, the other as evidently consequent to, his humiliation : whence it follows, that his being in the form of God, being the dignity he was possessed of before his humiliation, does not belong to him in virtue of any thing that he did or suffered, nor is any part of that glory to which he was exalted, or which he received after, or upon account of his sufferings.

Ver. 6. *Who, being in the form of God, &c.]* " Who, being " possessed of the divine nature, and of all its essential per- " fections, as the Son of God, and as the *brightness of the*

Father's glory, and express image of his person (Heb. i. 3.) ; " and so really, and in the strictest sense, God, in the true " and proper form of Deity, did not count it an usurpa- " tion, injury, or wrong, or any act of rapine in him, to " claim an equality of nature with God the Father ; he and " the Father being *essentially One*, though *personally distinct* " (John x. 30.)" In order to set forth the great humility of Christ in becoming man, the Apostle first tells us from how great and glorious a state he in some sense descended ; *he was in the form of God.* The following words go on to describe the excellency of his glory, which was so real and transcendent a glory, *that he thought it no robbery to be*, that is to say, he thought himself entitled to be *equal with God.* But if he thought it no robbery to assume this equality to God, undoubtedly he was equal : or if it was the effect of his humility, according to the translation of some, that he did not insist upon his equality with God, then certainly he had such an equality ; for where is the humility of not insisting on an equality which does not belong to us ? The Arians, translating these words, make use of expressions purposely chosen to exclude Christ from the dignity here mentioned ; for thus they make the Apostle speak : " Who being in the " form of God, did not arrogate, assume, or lay claim to any " equality or likeness to God ;" but this language bears no analogy to the words in the original, nor can be made to agree with the aim and design of the Apostle. St. Paul therefore evidently supposes, in his argument, that *this equality to God and form of God* did belong to Christ before his humiliation. Besides, the form of the argument affords us still farther evidence that St. Paul esteemed these characters to be proper and peculiar to Christ, his natural and inherent, not his borrowed glories. Should God communicate his glories to a creature, yet the glories of God so communicated, could in no sense be said to be the creature's *own* glories. Our *own* glories are those only which are proper and peculiar to our nature.

Ver. 7. *But made himself of no reputation, &c.]* " Never- " theless (*αλλὰ*) he was pleased, by a most wonderful act " of condescension, so far to disrobe, and, as it were " empty himself, of the bright appearances of his divine " majesty and glory, as not to make a pompous shew of " them, but, in great measure, to conceal them from the " observation of men ; while, in themselves, they conti- " nued to be really and essentially the same as ever, and " all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt substantially in " him (Col. ii. 9.) : and he voluntarily assumed the human " nature into personal union with himself, in so low and " mean a condition, as therein to become his Father's ser- " vant, living and acting, bleeding and dying, according to " his commandment (John, x. 18.), and as even to act the " part of a servant towards his disciples (Luke, xii. 37.), " and go through the most painful, humbling, and diffi- " cult services for the salvation of the faithful." *The form of a servant*, in this verse, is plainly opposed to *the form of God.* If therefore we can come at the determinate mean-
ing

earth, and *things* under the earth ;

II And *that* every tongue should confess^P

that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God
the Father.

^P John, 13. 13. Pf. 110. 5. Rom. 14. 9, 11. 1 Cor. 8. 6. & 12. 3. Acts, 2. 36. & 5. 31. & 10. 36.

ing of either of these expressions, it will certainly lead to the knowledge of the other. The true way to explain this place may be found in Heb. i. 1—7—14. The image which the writer seems to have before him is that of a great household. Christ is considered as the *Son*, the eternal Son of the everlasting Father, and heir of all things : other beings are the servants and attendants belonging to the family. Under this view, it is not hard to know what the Apostle means in the passage before us, when he says Christ took upon him the *form of a servant*. He was truly the Son of the family, the Heir of all things, and possessed the complete form and majesty of his Father ; but he in some sense descended from the glories of his Father, and became like one of the family, submitting to take the form and character of a servant upon him, by assuming the human nature, and uniting it to his divine. The Apostle adds, *being made in the likeness of men* : the reason and meaning of this addition the Apostle will likewise teach us, Heb. ii. 16. *Verily he took not on him the nature of angels*, &c. Angels are servants as well as men ; therefore by saying Christ took on him the *form of a servant*, there might be room to suppose him to have taken the nature of angels : to shew therefore what nature he took, the Apostle says, he took the form of a servant in the *likeness of men* ; that is, in the nature of man. So then, *the form of a servant* is a common mark and character of all the creatures of God ; the likeness here spoken of is the peculiar and proper character of each species. So that the form of a servant, and the likeness of a man, make a complete and perfect man. He was not only a man in appearance and likeness, but in reality, having the same common nature, distinguished by the same specific differences, but united to his own eternally divine nature.

Ver. 8. And being found in fashion, &c.] “ And when he “ was found in the common form and condition of man, “ as though he had been nothing more, he submitted himself to the lowest degree of service and sufferings ; and “ went into a course of the most humble obedience, as to “ his parents and magistrates, in all lawful things, so to “ his heavenly Father, as his servant, to answer all the demands of his holy law ; and this obedience he paid even “ unto death, and all along, till he came to die, yea, and in “ his dying (John, x. 18.), not an ordinary death, but the “ ignominious, painful, and accursed death of the cross, to “ shew that he stood in the place of transgressors, who were “ under the curse of the law, and that he came to redeem “ them from it, by bearing it for them (Gal. iii. 13.) ” It requires some attention to the Apostle’s argument to distinguish rightly between the *form*, the *likeness*, and the *fashion*, which are all in this place applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. In ver. 6, 7. the Apostle says, “ Who being in the form of “ God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” or, as some render it, “ was not fond,” or “ tenacious of appearing as God,” but *emptied* himself. Now, his nature he could not lay aside ; he continued to be the eternal Son of God, though he appeared not like the Son of God ;

and therefore, the Apostle adds, being man, he was *found in fashion as a man* ; appearing, in respect to his personal manifestation, in no greater majesty or glory than what belonged to him as a man. There are no different orders of beings to whom *the form of God* belongs ; and therefore the Apostle having told us that Christ was in the form of God, there wanted no addition to inform us what kind or manner of being he was : for the form of God belongs to God only. The *fashion of a man* denotes those distinguishing characters which belong to a man as such, the true and real appearances of a man. Let us proceed then to consider what led St. Paul to this expression, and why he might not as well say, “ *Being man*, he humbled himself,” as “ being “ *found in fashion as a man*, he humbled,” &c. For this we must look back to the first rise of the Apostle’s argument. The Person here spoken of, the Lord Jesus Christ, was in the form of God, but *emptied himself*—Emptied himself of what ? Not of his being or nature ; but of the glories and majesties belonging to him. Whatever he was as to nature and essence when he was in the form of God, that he continued to be still when he became man. But the fashion, or glories of the form of God, he laid down ; and though he continued to be the same, yet as to the fashion, or outward dignity and appearance, he was, in his personal manifestation to the world, a mere man ; being found, as the Apostle says, *in fashion as a man*. Had the Apostle conceived Christ, while here on earth, to have been a mere man only, in what tolerable sense could he say of him, *being found in fashion as a man* ? For in what fashion should a man be found ? What need was there of this limitation, unless in reality he was something more than a man ? But if you consider the man Jesus Christ to be the same person who was in the form of God, and who had, accordingly, a right to appear in the majesty and glory of God ; it is proper to ask, How did he appear on earth ? And the Apostle’s words are a proper answer to the question ; *He was found in fashion as a man*. The Apostle perhaps had another view in the choice of this expression, with respect to what follows ; *And became obedient unto death* : for it might well seem strange, that any should attempt the life of him, who was himself the Lord of life. He became obedient unto death ; but how came he to be called to this obedience ? Who was the bold man that laid hands upon this God upon earth, and was vain enough to think of compassing his death ? To which the Apostle gives this previous answer : *he was found in fashion as a man*, as such his life was attempted, and he *became obedient unto death*. If you allow the Apostle to have had this in view, you must needs suppose that he thought Christ more than mortal man, when he is at some pains to assign a reason that could tempt any one to think him liable to death. Let us farther consider, that the Apostle says, *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross*. Death is common to all mankind ; and, if to die be humility, in this respect all are equally humble. How comes Jesus Christ then to be distinguished by this instance of humility ? How comes

12 Wherefore, my beloved, ' as ye have al- now much more in my absence, ' work out your ways obeyed, not as in my presence only, but own salvation with ' fear and trembling.

1 Ch. 1. 5, 27, 29. 1 Rom. 13. 11—14. 2 Pet. 3. 18. & 1. 4—9. 1 Pet. 1. 13—15. Tit. 2. 11—14. 1 Cor. 15. 58. & 9. 24, 25. Mat. 23. 7. Johs. 6. 27, 40, 54, 57. Ch. 3. 8—14. 1 Pt. 2. 11. Il. 66. 2. 2 Cor. 7. 15. Heb. 4. 1. Eph. 6. 5.

comes that to be humility in him, which in every body else is necessity? If you speak of mere man, you may as properly say, that he is humble in having two legs or arms, as in submitting unto death, since both are equally the cause and work of nature: and yet you plainly see that the Apostle reckons it great humility in Christ, that he submitted unto death. What manner of person then was Christ Jesus, over whom death had no power, but through his own consent and submission? Mortal he was, or else he could not have died; more than mortal he was, or else he could not have avoided death; in which case, to die had been no humility. You must allow that the Apostle supposes him to be more than mere man. Had he, when he became man, ceased to be what he was before, death had been but the natural and necessary consequence of the change: but though he was a man, yet, being Lord of all things, it was always in his power to take up his life, and lay it down; for, as St. Paul says of those who put Christ to death, they killed the Lord of life, or Prince of life: being then, even whilst on earth, and clothed with human flesh and blood, the very Lord of life, and upholding all things by his power, he was superior to the necessity of human nature, and subject to death only, because he chose to die. To die therefore was humility; to die upon the cross still greater, submitting to those wretches, who, while they were destroying, lived only by his power, who was the Prince of life. It was humility therefore to become man: after he was man, it was humility to die; since the powers of life were in his own hand, and he could both lay down his life, and take it up.

Ver. 9—11, *Wherefore God also, &c.*] “ And having fulfilled his work of atonement in this humble, obedient, and suffering manner, God his Father, as a reward of all this, according to its deserts, has gloriously exalted him, not by advancing him to a state of greater essential happiness, perfection, or glory, than he had before, as God, which admits of no addition; but by raising him, as man, from the dead, receiving him up to glory, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him universal dominion as Mediator: and to recommend him by the most endearing motives to our acknowledgment of him as such, he has granted to him, in his office-capacity, as his incarnate Son, a new title of authority and honour, incomparably superior to any other name, dignity, or authority whatever, among angels or men; yea, too great for any mere creature to wear, or be worthy of, even the name of *the Saviour*, and the constituted Lord of all. And he has done this to the end that (viz) in token of the religious honours which are due to the exalted Saviour, every one should bow the knee, not at barely pronouncing the word *Jesus*, nor solely in a literal sense, in which the angels in heaven, who are to bow before him, have no knees; but in paying such solemn homage, adoration, and worship to this glorious and divine Person, whose name is *Jesus*; and in being so entirely subject to him, as is signified by bowing the

“ knee, as well as by other expressions of it; and is to be paid to him by all ranks of intelligent creatures, whether they be saints or angels in heaven, or such men as are living upon earth, or as are dead and buried under the earth, when they shall rise again, and appear at his tribunal; then they and all the wicked on earth, and all the devils in hell, shall either willingly, or by constraint, bow to him as the great Judge of all. And he is thus highly exalted, that the tongue of every one, of all nations and languages, should either cheerfully own and celebrate the praises of his universal dominion; or be forced to acknowledge, whether they would or not, that he, the anointed Saviour, is in his office-capacity, and exalted state, the great Head, Lord, and Ruler over all, and the universal Judge at the last day, to the glory of God the Father, whose honour it is to have always had such a divine Son as is worthy of so high a commission (John v. 23. and 1 John, ii. 23.)” In these words the Apostle sets before us the exceeding great glory to which God the Father exalted Christ’s human nature, as the end and reward of his great humility and sufferings. There is an insuperable difficulty in conceiving how any accession of glory or honour should be made to him, who was, before his coming into the world, *in the form of God*; unless we consider the present passage as solely relating to the Mediatorial office of Christ as the God-man. To set this matter in a true light, we must consider, that the glories of nature, and the glories of office, are very distinct glories. The Apostle says nothing of nature or essence; he speaks of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and considers him as the same person in all his different states of glory, humility, and exaltation. The same nature which he had, being in the form of God, the same he had in his state of humiliation, and now has in his state of exaltation. The Apostle’s argument does not infer that the natural powers and dignities of Christ Jesus were increased; but only that, in consequence of the redemption, God the Father put all things *immediately* under him in a very peculiar sense; making him Head over all as Mediatorial King. In Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. our Saviour himself declares that all power and authority were given him at his resurrection. There is no doubt but this distinguishing power is part of the exaltation that St. Paul speaks of, to which God the Father raised Christ for his sufferings. Those who please, may see more to this purpose in Ephes. i. The Apostle proceeds, *God hath given Christ a name above every name,—that every tongue should confess, &c.* Confession here implies much more than a bare acknowledgment that Christ is the Lord. It comprehends those honours, and that worship, which those who heartily confess him to be the Lord, will readily pay him. Instead of *things in heaven, &c.* ver. 10. some read, *of celestial beings, and of those upon and under the earth*: “ Angels and men, the living and the dead, yea, devils themselves shall do homage to Jesus; who shall be ever adored, as the Saviour of his faithful saints, as

13 ¹ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do ² of his good pleasure.

14 ¹ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

¹ Rom. 6. 13, 14. ² If. 26. 12. ³ Zech. 10. 12. ⁴ Pl. 73. 24. ⁵ 1 Pet. 5. 10. ⁶ 2 Cor. 3. 5. & 12. 9. ⁷ Heb. 13. 2. ⁸ 1 Thes. 5. 23, 24. ⁹ Rom. 9. 21, 16. ¹⁰ Eph. 5. 6, 9, 11. & 2. 8. ¹¹ 2 Tim. 1. 9. ¹² Rom. 12. 17. & 14. 1. ¹³ 1 Tim. 2. 8. ¹⁴ 1 Pet. 2. 12. & 4. 9. ¹⁵ Ver. 3.

“ the head of all holy and happy spirits; and the sovereign and uncontrollable Lord of all those, whose rebellion against him and his heavenly Father, has made them the worthy objects of perpetual displeasure and punishment.” See Ephes. i. 10. Rom. xiv. 9. Rev. i. 18.

Ver. 12, 13. Wherefore, my beloved,] If St. Paul’s discourse here is read with attention, it will be found, that having dispatched his argument from the example of Christ, he comes now to apply it to the purpose for which he brought it; namely, to press upon them that kind and friendly temper and behaviour towards one another, mentioned, ver. 3—5. This is still more plain, if we observe that in ver. 14. he continues his discourse upon this subject in the general. Mr. Peirce gives a very peculiar interpretation of the present passage, which we will just subjoin: “ Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed me with the greatest humility and concern, not only when I have been present with you, but more especially since I left you, I am the more encouraged to urge upon you by this example of Christ, the duty that I have recommended to you, of looking to the concerns of others, as well as your own; and of promoting each other’s welfare. And you have good reason for this, because in so doing you comply with the motion of God himself, who works in you to be inclined and to act, out of good-will; and therefore, take care that you do all such good offices cheerfully, without murmurings,” &c.—But the following, as it is the more general, so does it seem by far the more just interpretation of this text: “ Wherefore, my beloved, as God hath, in the person of his Son, thus gloriously rewarded that bright assemblage of virtues, for which he was so incomparably illustrious; and particularly that condescension, humility, and benevolence, which I have been so earnestly recommending to you; let it be considered by you as an engagement to tread in his steps, with diligence and resolution, so far as the feeble powers of human nature regenerated by grace may admit. And, as justice requires me to acknowledge that you have always been obedient to my instructions and exhortations, while I have had the pleasure of being with you, be solicitous that not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, (which, though it deprives you of some advantages, yet as it is owing to my bonds in your cause, ought to increase the tenderness of your concern for my comfort) you may work out your own salvation with great earnestness and assiduity; yea, considering its infinite importance, with holy fear and trembling. I say your own salvation; for that will be most effectually secured and promoted by the temper that I have now been recommending. Seize that happy opportunity of doing it which divine grace affords; for God is he who worketh in you, both to will and to perform, of his own good pleasure. You ought therefore to consider every good affection and purpose which arises in your heart, as suggested by his grace, which waits upon you to enable you

“ to bring it into perfection.” The original of ver. 13. is very emphatic; for it asserts on the one hand, that God is actually or continually operating in the souls of true believers; and on the other, that thus to work in the heart for such noble purposes, is the prerogative of God, and an effect worthy of his divine attributes and perfections. Bp. Sherlocke has given us a fine interpretation of this passage of scripture; which, he observes, consists of two parts; an exhortation, and an argument, by which that exhortation is enforced. The exhortation you have in these words, *Work out your own salvation, &c.* The argument to enforce it follows in the next words: *For it is God which worketh, &c.* an argument which may at first sight seem rather to lead to confidence only, and not at all to fear. For if God be for us, who can be against us? or what is there to fear, when we are thus supported? The disciples of the gospel had many enemies to encounter with. Now with respect to these, the argument may furnish us with great confidence. There is likewise a fear which respects our friends, and that is, a fear of losing their favour and assistance; and the more a man is dependant upon his friends, the greater is generally his fear of losing their protection. Of this kind of fear the Apostle speaks in the text, *Work out, &c.* for it is a work that you are no ways sufficient for of yourselves; therefore have a care of offending him on whom you entirely depend.” That the Apostle means this kind of fear, may be seen by his own way of reasoning. In the beginning of this chapter, he presses humility upon the Philippians, from the example of Christ, and the great reward he obtained for his glorified humanity on that account; and, as if humility and fear were the same thing, he thus concludes, “ Wherefore, my beloved, work out, &c.” If we believe God works in us, it will make us humble, because we can do nothing without him; it will likewise make us fear and tremble to disobey him, from whom our salvation cometh. That this fear is the fear of offending God, and losing his favour, is further evident from ver. 14. *Do all things without, &c.* Now, what fear is it that makes men obey cheerfully? Not the fear of punishment; for who grumble more than slaves? But where the fear that possesses the heart is the fear of disobliging a kind friend or beloved master upon whom we depend, there fear gives wings to obedience. Ver. 15. supplies us with the like argument: the words are these; *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, &c.* Now then, the fear which the Apostle speaks of is the fear of a son; the fear of offending the father whom he loves; it is a fear which renders obedience blameless, without rebuke; which no fear can do, but a fear of offending him we love, and him we depend on. The reason why we ought to fear, is *because God worketh in us, &c.* To will and to do good, are terms and conditions of our salvation; and therefore from whence we have the power to will and to do, from thence we have the means of salvation. Now salvation comprehends in it all the good that we are capable of enjoying, without

15 ^a That ye may be blameless and * harm-
less, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the
midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among
whom ^b ye shine as lights in the world ;

16 ^a Holding forth the ^b word of life ; ^c that
I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I ^d have
not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

17 ^e Yea, and if I be ^f offered upon the sac-
rifice and service of your faith, I joy, and re-

joice with you all.

18 For the same cause also ^g do ye joy, and
rejoice with me.

19 ^h † But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send
ⁱ Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may
be of good comfort, when I know your
state.

20 For I have no man ^k like-minded, who
will naturally care for your state.

^a Eph. 5. 7, 8. Mat. 5. 45, 14—16. 1 Thes. 5. 5. 6. Luke, 6. 35. Prov. 4. 18. with Deut. 32. 5, 6. ^b Or *sincere*. ^c Or *shine ye*. Mat.
5. 16. Prov. 4. 18. Eccl. 9. 1. 1f. 60. 1, 2. ^d Ch. 1. 27 & 4. 1. Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 23. Jude, 3. ^e John, 6. 63, 68. & 5. 25. 1 Pet.
1. 3, 23. Jam. 1. 18. Jer. 15. 16. Pf. 119. 50, 93. AGs, 13. 26. ^f Ch. 1. 26. 2 Cor. 1. 14. & 4. 1. 2 Thes. 2. 19, 20. ^g Gal. 2. 2.
& 4. 11. 1 Thes. 3. 5. ^h 2 Cor. 12. 15. 1 Thes. 2. 8. Col. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 4. 6. Ch. 1. 20. Rom. 15. 16. 2 Cor. 7. 3, 4. ⁱ Poured
^j Num. 28. 7. ^k Ch. 3. 1. & 4. 4. ^l Ch. 1. 25. Philem. 22. Jam. 4. 15. Ver. 2. ^m Or *moreover*. ⁿ Ch. 1. 1.
Rom. 16. 21. 1 Thes. 3. 2. Eph. 6. 21, 22. Col. 4. 8, 9. 1 Cor. 16. 10. ^o Or *so dear unto me*. Pf. 55. 13, 14. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2.

without which our life is death, and our hope misery : so that if we depend upon God to work in us both to will and to do, we depend upon him for all that is, or can be valuable to man.—And farther, *God worketh in us of his own good pleasure* : we have no right or claim to his assistance except through Christ. All our danger is in losing the favour of God, and therefore for that must be all our fear. But farther, this fear arises from a sense of our own insufficiency ; and since God does help our weakness, it is great reason that we should love and adore him : so that the fear which arises hence, is not in the least degree inconsistent with the perfect love of God. That it is of his good pleasure that he assists us, is a great evidence of his love to us, and a great argument of our love to him. So that to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, is, “ with the utmost care and diligence to set ourselves to perform the will and commands of God, to be diligent to make our calling and election sure.” See the *Inferences and Reflections*.

Ver. 15. *As lights in the world ;*] *As light-houses* ; according to the original word, which alludes to the *buildings* so called. The passage in this view may be paraphrased, “ Among whom be careful that you shine as elevated lights in the dark world about you ; that you may direct those who sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks, which every where lie in their way.” See Matth. v. 14, 16. Several of our expositors prefer the marginal rendering of our bibles ; *among whom shine ye, &c.* Instead of *nation*, some render the original *generation*.

Ver. 16. *Holding forth, &c.*] *Holding fast*—that I may glory.

Ver. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered, &c.*] The proper import of the words rendered *offered upon*, is, “ to be poured forth, as a libation.” Almost every reader must know, that as *oil* and *wine* made a part of the provisions of the table which God had ordained in the Jewish ritual, a proportionable quantity of each should attend every bullock, goat, ram, lamb, or kid, which was presented at his altar ; so the heathens likewise used such libations ; and sometimes they used *blood*, mingled with wine, in honour of idol deities. See Pf. xvi. 4. The Apostle considers the faith of the Philippians as an acceptable sacrifice presented to God ; and if he incurred martyrdom for his zeal to pro-

mote it, he might speak of his *blood*, as a *libation poured out*, with great beauty and propriety. One cannot but observe the heroic manner in which the Apostle here speaks of his suffering ; which he considers as matter of congratulation rather than of condolence. It brings to mind the behaviour of the brave Athenian mentioned by Plutarch, who returned to Athens from the victorious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action ; and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were assembled, uttered only these two words, *χαίρετε, χαίρομεν* : “ Take your share of our joy ;” and immediately dropped down dead at their feet.

Ver. 19.] St. Paul, having declared his readiness to lay down his life to serve the Philippians, (among the other Gentile churches which were in the like circumstances) seems to have apprehended how tenderly they would take his mentioning such a thing to them ; and therefore, to prevent their being overmuch concerned, he here tells them, that however willing he was to die for them, yet he did not expect to do so presently ; that he rather thought he should escape now, and in a little time be freed from his present bonds. And that he might testify his earnest and affectionate care for them, he acquaints them, that he had hopes shortly to see how his affair was likely to turn out ; and that then he should be able to spare Timothy, whom he would send to them, and from whom he expected a pleasing account of their good estate. He further tells them, that he hoped shortly to have an opportunity of visiting them himself ; but in the mean time, while he was not at liberty to come himself, nor could well spare Timothy, he thought it necessary to send back Epaphroditus to them, of whom he gives an excellent character, recommending him to their kind and courteous reception, ver. 10—30. Instead of, *that I may be of good comfort*, some read, *that I may be refreshed*.

Ver. 20. *No man like-minded,*] “ *No man of a like disposition ; who will so naturally, with such a generous tenderness and concern, take care of your affairs.*” Some understand the words in the sense of the marginal reading of our bibles, *I have no man so dear unto me* : “ No man whom I value as myself, as my own soul, — *ισὸς ψυχῆς*, — but him.” Instead of *naturally*, the Syriac and Vulgate read *sincerely*.

21 For all ¹ seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, ^m as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24 But ⁿ I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you ^o Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he ^p longed after you all, and was

full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was ^q sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, ^r but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 ^s Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and ^{*} hold such in reputation:

30 Because for ^t the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

¹ 1 Cor. 10. 24, 33. ² Tim. 3. 2. & 4. 10, 16. & 1. 15. Hof. 10. 1. Zech. 7. 5. with Mat. 16. 24. Luke, 14. 26. 1 Cor. 13. 5. Rom. 15. 1—7. Ch. 3. 18, 19. Ver. 4. ^m Acts, 16. 1. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. Rom. 16. 21. ⁿ See ch. 1. 25. Philem. 22. Ch. 1. 10, 25, 26. ^o Ch. 4. 18. 2 Cor. 8. 23. Philem. 2. Col. 1. 7. & 4. 12. ^p Ch. 1. 8. & 4. 1. ^q Pf. 34. 19. John, 11. 4. Job. 5. 19. Pf. 41. 2, 3. & 103. 3, 4. & 107. 20. ^r Rom. 12. 15. Heb. 11. 7. 1 Cor. 10. 13. ^s Rom. 16. 2. & 15. 32. 1 Cor. 16. 10, 18. & 9. 14. 1 Thes. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17. Gal. 6. 6. ^{*} Or *honour such.* ^t Mat. 25. 36—40. 1 Cor. 16. 17. Ch. 4. 10, 18. Acts, 20. 24.

Ver. 21. For all seek their own,] It can hardly be supposed that St. Paul intended here absolutely to tax every one of those who were about him, and assisted him in preaching the gospel, with an utter neglect of this interest of Christ, and an entire self-seeking. The word *seek* which we render *not*, might perhaps better be rendered *rather than*. See on Matth. ix. 13. He may be understood to speak comparatively, and to mean no more than this, That their other preachers were defective in resolution and courage, being too prone to consult their own ease, and decline such work as was fatiguing and hazardous. The case was this; The *interest of Christ* required at that time, that somebody should go to Philippi. St. Paul could not then spare Timothy, as is plain from his saying, that *he hoped to be able to send him*: but nobody else cared to undertake the fatigue of the journey, and to risk such treatment as they knew the Apostle had before met with there. This reluctance he taxes in the preceding verse, as a *not sincerely caring* for the concerns of the Philippians; and in this verse, as a preferring of their own concerns to those of Christ. Such a temper was very contrary to St. Paul's, who *sought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved*. See 1 Cor. x. 33.

Ver. 22. Ye know the proof] *The experience.*

Ver. 25. But your messenger, &c.] *But your Apostle, and who is now to act for me with you; or, the ready minister to the relief of my necessities, by whose faithful hand I received that liberal supply, which your pious friendship so cheerfully advanced.*

Ver. 27. Sorrow upon sorrow.] Some think the meaning is, "*Sorrow* for Epaphroditus's death, *upon sorrow* for his "sickness." This may well be allowed, without excluding the other circumstances of St. Paul's situation; for the loss of such an excellent person,—and especially when his attending and serving the Apostle was the occasion of it,—would have been a great addition, both to the sorrow of his confinement, and to the sorrow that he had from the opposition made against him by the Judaizers; of the latter of

which we find he could not write to the Philippians without weeping. See ch. iii. 18.

Ver. 28. I sent him] *I have sent him.* The Vulgate renders the word *Σπεδαισιτέως*, which we translate *the more carefully*, by *festinantius*,—the *more speedily*; which seems best to agree with the Apostle's design: nor is it unreasonable to suppose that this word should respect *time*, since all its conjugates frequently do.

Ver. 30. Not regarding his life,] *Hazarding his life*—*Παραδιδυστάμενος*, exposing his life to the utmost danger; as they did, who took care of people infected with the pestilence, and who were called *parabolani*, or *parabolarii*; or as they did, who fought with wild beasts. The next clause may be rendered, *that he might complete* [or *fill up*] *the remainder* [or *residue*] *of your beneficence to me*; that is to say, supply me with your further contributions. See 1 Thess. ii. 16. Col. i. 24. 2 Cor. ix. 12. The Apostle considers them as disposed to have rendered him what service they could in person; but not having an opportunity to do it themselves, Epaphroditus was in this respect their proxy and representative.

Inferences.—We know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Few Christians, so called, are unacquainted with the remarkable phrases in which it is here expressed: but how few comparatively, seriously pause upon it, and labour to affect their hearts with its important meaning! And yet how engaging to all this is the matchless example of Christ! Though he was really God, possessed of the divine nature and perfections equally with the Father, and so had a rightful claim to all the honours of Deity; yet, in his infinite love and pity, he stooped so low as to assume human nature into personal union with himself; and in this nature, instead of shining forth in all the lustres of Godhead, he ordinarily concealed them, and, as it were, disrobed himself of them; and, appearing in the mean state of a servant, submitted to the lowest and severest course of obedience

CHAP. III.

He warneth them to beware of the false teachers of the circumcision, shewing that himself, if any, hath greater cause than they to trust in the righteousness of the law: which notwithstanding he counteth as dung and loss, to gain Christ; he exhorteth them to be thus minded, to imitate him, and to decline the ways of carnal Christians.

[Anno Domini 62.]

FINALLY, my brethren, ^a rejoice in the Lord. ^b To write the same things to

you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

² Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision.

³ For we are ^d the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

⁴ Though ^e I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more;

^a Ch. 4. 4. 1 Sam. 2. 1. Pl. 5. 11. & 32. 11. & 33. 1. & 37. 4. & 149. 2. & 4. 6, 7. & 47. 6, 7. If. 61. 10. Joel. 2. 23. Hab. 3. 18. Rom. 5. 11. 1 Thes. 5. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 8. & 4. 13. Luke, 10. 20
^b 2 Pet. 1. 12. & 3. 1.
^c Mat. 7. 15. & 24. 4. If. 56. 10-12. 2 Cor. 11. 13. Gal. 5. 17. Ver. 19. Gal. 5. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 4-7. Tit. 1. 10. Rev. 2. 9. & 3. 4.
^d Deut. 10. 16. & 30. 6. Jer. 4. 4. Col. 2. 11, 12.
^e 2 Cor. 11. 18-22.
 John, 4. 23, 24. Rom. 1. 9. & 2. 29. & 4. 11, 12. Gal. 6. 14-16. Ver. 7-10. Mat. 16, 24. Ver. 7-9.

dience to his Father's will and law, till he finished it in the painful and shameful death of the *cross*.—Often let us contemplate this amazing object: often let us represent to our admiring, to our dissolving hearts, the Man Christ Jesus, extended there, and pouring forth his soul in agony and blood. As often let us remember his high original, his divine glories, in the eternal bosom of the Father. With pleasure let us reflect, that he having ennobled this low nature of ours by so intimate an union with his Divinity, God the Father has exalted his humanity, and given him in his Mediatorial capacity a name above every name, human or angelic, in the visible, or in all the different regions of the invisible world. Let our knees gladly bow to so amiable a Sovereign, and let us with pleasure view the approaching day, when every knee shall own his authority, and every tongue confess him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

In the mean time, let us never forget the purposes for which the Apostle has here called our meditations to these wonderful and instructive truths. It is to inculcate upon us (O may we ever inculcate it upon ourselves) that the same mind should always be in us that was also in him: that, if there be any consolation in such a Saviour, any comfort in such love as he teaches, any bowels of tenderness in human nature, any endearing fellowship in the one Spirit which we derive from him, we may with united hearts and hands be carrying on the one great business of his servants, working out our salvation with fear and trembling; avoiding every thing that may grieve and injure others, every thing that may discredit our holy profession. And if we be now made by him the children of God, may we shine with a bright steady flame, as lights in the world; and hold out, for the benefit of all around us, the word of life; as the gospel which redeems the faithful from the second death, and raises them to eternal life, may properly be called. May we spread its lustre through as wide a circle as possible, and with it *that* happiness, which nothing but a cordial belief of it and subjection to it can bring to the human heart.

Let us then learn, from these wise and pious exhortations of the Apostle, at once our duty and our dependence: our duty, to work out our own salvation; our dependance on the grace of him who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. And therefore let us so seek di-

vine grace, and rest upon it, as to exert with vigour and resolution the faculties which are to co-operate with it; and let us so endeavour to exert the faculties which God has given us, as to confide in divine grace, and rest continually upon it; without which we shall neither will nor do any thing pleasing to God, or available to our own salvation: for, in this sense, *salvation is of the Lord*, and through *his blessing*, which is upon his people. (Psal. iii. 8.)

Again. To what sublime heights of piety and virtue does the hope of the gospel elevate the mind of mortal man! Behold this holy apostle, not only presenting himself as a resolute victim at the altar of God, but speaking of that stroke by which his blood was to be poured out, as an occasion of joy, and calling for the congratulation of his friends upon it! Behold him with pleasure resigning the society of those who were dearest and most useful to him, at a time when he seemed most of all to need their assistance; even that of a friend, who would most *naturally care for their estate*, when he knew *none that were like-minded!* And O that this might be the character of all the ministers of Christ, *naturally*, by a second, a divine nature, as a mother for her child, with genuine affection, *to care for the state* of those committed to them, *not by constraint*, but from a principle of love, which will make all necessary labours easy. But alas! how much reason is there to lament the prevalency of a contrary disposition among all ranks of men, the sacred order itself not excepted!

What ingratitude does this argue, yea, what stupid insensibility, that any thing, that every thing, should be dearer to us, than the interest of that Saviour who purchased us to himself with his blood! Happy they, who are distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, in a time of prevailing apostacy! How beautiful a description does the Apostle here give of the piety and humility of young Timothy, while serving with him as a son with a father in the gospel. Thus let young and aged ministers behave to each other, as fathers and sons; the young paying the elder such reverend regards, the aged affording to the younger such kind and tender patronage, and shewing a solicitous concern to prepare them for filling up their place in the church with increasing advantage.

Some obvious instruction arises from what is here said of good Epaphroditus, whose affection to his Christian friends was so ardent, and whose zeal for the work of Christ

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an law, a Pharisee;

† Gen. 17. 12. Acts, 22. 3. & 23. 6. & 26. 4, 5. Rom. 11. 1. 2 Cor. 11. 18—22.

Christ had even endangered his life. Great reason is there to hold such, wherever they are found, in high esteem, tenderly to sympathize with them, earnestly to entreat God for them, if at any time diseases threaten their useful lives; and to own the mercy of God, not to them only but to us, when he is pleased to raise them up, and restore them to a capacity of ministering in his church. And let us go back in our memories to the days and weeks of dangerous sickness which any of us have known, and humble ourselves before God, that we have no better improved for his glory, and for the good of his church, his mercy to us, in bringing us up from the gates of the grave.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. By every endearing argument the Apostle exhorts his Philippian brethren:

1. To love unity and humility. *If there be any consolation in Christ (παράκλησις); if my exhortation has any weight, and you experience any joy in the Redeemer; if there be any comfort of love, from the sense of the love of God shed abroad in your hearts; if there be any fellowship of the Spirit, in mutual union and complacency in each other, or, through the Holy Ghost, with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; if there be any bowels and mercies, in the gracious Saviour towards you; or if you have ever felt the like tender compassions one towards another; if it be most desirable to abound in all these things, and you have already known their value and excellence, fulfil ye my joy; and continue to give me this highest satisfaction in you, that ye be like-minded, animated as by one soul; having the same love one towards another as the members of the same body; being of one accord, unanimous in desire and design to promote the Redeemer's glory, and the salvation of men's souls; and of one mind, holding the same principles and sentiments according to the purity of the gospel. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; affect no pre-eminence, dispute not for applause, nor speak or act under a contentious spirit; but in lowliness of mind, the great ornament of the Christian character, let each esteem other better than themselves; entertaining lowly thoughts of their own attainments, conscious of their manifold infirmities, and entertaining the best opinion of their brethren. Look not every man on his own things, to admire himself, or pursue his own selfish ends, his ease, honour, or worldly advantage; but every man also on the things of others; not as busy-bodies, to pry into them censoriously, but desiring to promote their real good, and, from the view of their excellencies, to be humble in their own eyes.*

2. He enforces his exhortation with the most powerful argument—the example of the blessed Jesus. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, even that lowliness which in him was so eminently exemplified; who, being in the form of God, possessing every essential perfection of the divine nature, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and justly to claim a parity*

with the Father in uncreated glory: *but, in infinite condescension and pity towards us, he made himself of no reputation, laying aside the splendour of his divine Majesty and took upon him the form of a servant, assuming the human nature in the lowest condition; and was made in the likeness of men, having the same reasonable soul and human flesh, the corruption of our nature only excepted. And being found in fashion as a man, in all things made like unto man, sin excepted, he humbled himself before God and man, through a life of affliction, and at last became obedient unto death, for us men and for our salvation, even the death of the cross, that most painful, ignominious, and accursed death; submitting thereunto, that he might bear our sins in his own body on the tree. Wherefore, having finished the work which the Father had given him to do, to his fullest satisfaction, God also hath highly exalted him, in his human nature, to the Mediatorial throne, as the reward of his sufferings, and given him a name which is above every name, all power, authority, and dominion being given to him over every creature; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and divine honours be paid to the Incarnate Son; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; by angels and men, and every intelligent creature; yea, even devils must be compelled to own his glory; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the universal Sovereign, to the glory of God the Father; who has thus exalted him, as man, to the throne of majesty on high, for the purposes of his own glory. Note, (1.) The example of our Lord should be ever before us; and that, if any thing can, will suppress the workings of pride. (2.) The love of a crucified Jesus should warm our hearts, and knit them in closest union to each other.*

2dly, The Apostle proceeds in his exhortations:

1. To Christian diligence. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, and therefore I entertain a strong hope concerning you, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, giving all diligence to make your calling and election sure, in the use of every appointed means, jealous over your deceitful hearts, and watchful against every thing that might offend the Father of mercies, whose love you have tasted; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure; it is his grace—it is his Spirit—it is his divine power, which worketh every thing that is good in the penitent and believing soul.*

2. To an exemplary conversation, such as may confound their enemies, and comfort him, their faithful servant, under all his sufferings. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings, content under every providential dispensation, and studiously avoiding every occasion of contention among yourselves; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, and behave so irreproachably, that your most malignant accusers may have no evil thing justly to say of you: for ye dwell in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; the keen eyes of your enemies are open,*

6 'Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; law, blameless.
touching the righteousness which is in the 7 But what things were ^hgain to me, those

¹ Gal. 1. 13, 14. ² Acts, 8. 3. & 9. 1. & 22. 3, 4. & 26. 9. 10. ³ 1 Cor. 15. 9. ⁴ 1 Tim. 1. 13. ⁵ Acts, 23. 1. ⁶ 2 Cor. 4. 4. ⁷ 2 Tim. 1. 3. ⁸ Rom. 7. 9. & 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3, 5. ⁹ Mat. 12. 44. & 16. 24.

open, and they wait for your halting; gladly would they catch at any thing which might countenance them in their iniquities: among whom ye shine as lights in the world; your bright examples, like suns in your several spheres, darting unwelcome light upon the workers of wickedness, and shining to the glory of God; holding forth the word of life, even the blessed gospel, both in your lips and in your conduct, holding it fast in all fidelity, holding it up with all zeal and boldness, if, under God, it may be blest to illumine the darkness of those around you, and bring them to the light of life; or, at least, to leave them inexcusable in their impenitence. And this will be a singular satisfaction to me, when I find that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain, but behold in you such blessed effects of my ministry, and that all my conflicts are crowned with success. Yea, and if I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith, and should now be called as a victim to bleed in confirmation of the gospel which I preach, far from being intimidated with the prospect, I joy and rejoice with you all, congratulating you, and happy in myself, that I am counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom, and enabled to leave so powerful a testimony behind me, for the strengthening of your faith. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me; and, far from being grieved, or disheartened, exult that I am enabled to be thus faithful unto death. Note, (1.) Every Christian is a city set on a hill; he needs peculiar circumspection; a flaw in his conduct will be exaggerated into a fault of the first magnitude. (2.) We must hold up to the world, in our profession and examples, the word of life; not ostentatiously proclaiming our own goodness, but, for God's glory, or the profit of men's souls, shewing our light before men. (3.) Nothing can more revive a minister's heart, or make him so cheerfully content to suffer for the cause, even to death, as seeing his labours successful, and his ministry blest.

3dly, Since he was now unable to visit them himself, he promises to send them two of his dearest friends to supply his absence, and speaks of them in the highest terms of regard and commendation.

1. He mentions Timothy. Though he had spoken of his readiness to die, he informs them, for their comfort, that he apprehended no immediate danger. But I trust, says he, in the Lord Jesus, that I shall be delivered; and that, needful as his company is now to me, I shall be able to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state, and hear of your prosperity. For I have no man like-minded, so perfectly united in sentiment with me, and so in affection knit to you; who will therefore naturally care for your state, and, with genuine regard, desire to advance the good of your souls. For all here, too generally at least, seek their own, desirous of ease and earthly advantages; not with a single eye, as Timothy does, pursuing the things which are Jesus Christ's, for his glory, and the edification of his people. But ye know the proof of him, by past experience, with what zeal and fidelity

he laboured among you; and that, at a sou with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel, willing to run all hazards, to share my fatigues and sufferings, and in all duty and affection obeying me as a child. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me, after I have appeared, as I shortly expect to do, at Cæsar's tribunal: but I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly, when I have regained my liberty. Note, (1.) They who enter the ministry with selfish views, seeking their own things, not those of Jesus Christ, shall bear their burden, when the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls appears. (2.) A faithful pastor feels the same tender concern for the children that he has begotten in the gospel, as if they were the offspring of his own body.

2. He commends to them Epaphroditus, who brought this Epistle to them. Yet I supposed it necessary, being unable to come myself, or to spare Timothy just at this critical juncture, to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, who willingly served and suffered in the same blessed cause; but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants; delivering your kind benefactions, and giving me every assistance which lay in his power. For he longed after you all, and earnestly wished to be labouring again among you; and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick; knowing how deeply the sad news would affect you. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death; his disease, to human view, mortal and desperate: but God had mercy on him, and brought him back from the gates of the grave; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow, anguish for his loss being added to my other burdens. I sent him therefore the more carefully, and with greater haste, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice in his recovery and return to you; and that I may be the less sorrowful at his departure, when I know what delight and advantage his company will be to you. Receive him therefore in the Lord, with all gladness, with cordial regard, and as the ambassador of the Redeemer; and hold such in reputation, highly respecting them for their fidelity and zeal; because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, having contracted his illness from the fatigues that he underwent, not regarding his life, but readily hazarding his health, to supply your lack of service toward me, which the distance rendered you incapable of affording me. Note, (1.) Though we must not carelessly neglect our health, yet, when the cause of Christ demands it, a faithful minister will shew a noble contempt of life, and be ready to expose himself to disease or death. (2.) They who know the value of a faithful minister, will count it a singular mercy that he is longer spared to labour, and will rejoice in him before God.

CHAP. III.

ST. Paul wrote the most of his epistles to confute the erroneous doctrines and practices of the Judaizing teachers, who, in the first age, greatly disturbed the churches, more

I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but*

loss¹ for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ² for whom I have suf-

¹ If. 53. 17. Jer. 9. 23, 24. John. 17. 3, 8. Col. 2. 2. 1 Cor. 2. 2. Eph. 1. 17. & 3. 18, 19. 1 John. 5. 20. Gal. 1. 16. Mat. 16. 17
² 1 Cor. 4. 9—12. 2 Cor. 4. 3—10. & 11. 23—27. Mat. 19. 29. & 16. 24. Act. 20. 24. & 21. 13. 1 Tim. 3. 11.

more especially by their affirming, that unless the Gentiles were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. But, as these teachers artfully suited their arguments to the circumstances and prejudices of the persons whom they addressed, the controversy has a new aspect in almost every Epistle. And the Apostle's reasonings, in confutation of their doctrine, comprehend a great variety of particulars, for explaining and establishing the doctrines of the gospel, highly worthy of the attention of Christians in every age.

Among the Philippians, as among the Corinthians, the Judaizers supported their erroneous doctrines chiefly by magnifying their own character and authority as teachers, and by appealing to their circumcision, as a proof of their right descent from Abraham, and by calling themselves *the circumcision*, to intimate that they were the keepers of the former revelations, and the only objects of the divine favour. Moreover, they boasted of their knowledge of the ancient revelations, and of the care with which they observed the divine law. And, on all these accounts, they hoped the Philippians would pay more regard to their opinions in matters of religion, than to St. Paul's, whom they affected to despise, because he was born among the Gentiles; by which they said his descent from Abraham was at least rendered uncertain. Withal, supposing him to have been educated at Tarsus, they affirmed that his knowledge of the ancient revelations was superficial and erroneous: and that, having apostatized from the institutions of Moses, it was little wonder that he now represented these institutions as of no avail in the sight of God.

His confutation of the pretensions of these wicked men, and of the calumnies by which they endeavoured to lessen his authority, the Apostle introduced, with telling the Philippians, that to write the same things to them, concerning the false teachers and their pretensions, which he had written to other churches, and which he had ordered Epaphroditus to represent to them, was by no means troublesome to him, seeing it was safe for them, ver. 1.—Wherefore as he had written to others, so he now wrote to them, to beware of the Judaizers, whom he called *dogs*, a name which the Jews, in contempt, gave to the Gentiles; and *evil workmen, or labourers*, on account of their corrupting the gospel. And because the unbelieving Jews boasted in the appellation of *the circumcision*, as importing that they alone, of all mankind, were acceptable to God, the Apostle desired the Philippians to beware of them, calling them *the excision*, to shew that they were soon to be destroyed. This severity in speaking against the unbelieving Jews and Judaizing teachers, the Apostle used, by the direction of the Spirit of God, to make the Philippians shun their company and conversation, and to put them on their guard not to allow them any footing in their church, ver. 2.—Next, he assured the Philippians, that the disciples of Christ are *the circumcision*; they are persons acceptable to God,

through the Blood of the Covenant, possessing the inward qualities signified by circumcision, and worship God in spirit, and glory in their relation to Christ as his disciples, and not in their fleshly descent from Abraham, nor in any right pertaining to the flesh. At the same time, to shew the falsehood of the calumnies which these deceivers spread abroad concerning the Apostle's extraction, he told the Philippians, that if any particular teacher among them could have confidence of acceptance with God, on account of his descent and privileges as a Jew, he himself had more cause for such confidence than that teacher: by which they might know, that if he spake in a slighting manner of these things, it was not from envy, as being destitute of them, ver. 4.—For he was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth: he was a branch from the stock of Israel: he belonged to the honourable tribe of Benjamin, which did not join in the defection under Jeroboam. Though born in Tarsus, he was a Hebrew, descended from Hebrew parents; and was educated a Pharisee, a sect which was acknowledged to have the most perfect knowledge of the law, ver. 5.—These particulars the Apostle mentioned also in his Epistle to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xi. 22.—And to make the Philippians still more sensible of his title, if any one could have it, to have confidence in the flesh, he told them, that, from his earliest years, he was so exceedingly zealous of the law, and of the traditions of the fathers, that he persecuted the Christians as enemies to both. And, with respect to his own external obedience to the law, he assured them, that it was altogether blameless, ver. 6.—Wherefore, whatever honour the false teachers could claim on account of their knowledge of the law, and of the care with which they obeyed its precepts, that honour was more justly due to him. Nevertheless, all these things, which, indeed, formerly he considered as the greatest advantages, he now looked on as things to be cast away, because they were of no use in the justification of sinners, ver. 7.—Nay, he regarded all human attainments as things to be cast away, when set in competition with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord; and had actually thrown them all away, that he might obtain justification through him, ver. 8.—not by his own righteousness, which never could merit justification; but through the righteousness which is of God, by faith, ver. 9.—which imparts to the soul an experimental knowledge of Christ, a resurrection to newness of life, and an ability to suffer with Christ for the truth, ver. 10.—Which righteousness, holiness, and power, accompanied with persevering fidelity, will be rewarded with a glorious resurrection from the dead, ver. 11.—which blessing of a resurrection from the dead the Apostle had not yet received; but which he represents himself as striving to secure. And, by comparing his exertions for that purpose with the exertions of those who contended in the games, he gives us a lively picture of the labour and difficulty of the Christian course, ver. 12, 13, 14.—Then he exhorted the Philippians to follow

ferred the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,

¹ Heb. 3. 14. Mat. 13. 44.

^m Rom. 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3, 5. Gal. 3. 10. Il. 64. 6. Pl. 143. 2.

low his example, in striving to obtain justification and eternal life by faith, ver. 15, 16, 17.—and pronounced all who sought to be justified by the sacrifices and purifications of the law of Moses, enemies to the death of Christ, ver. 18.—and assured them, that their end would be perdition; for their only view in teaching such a method of justification was to gratify their own lusts, ver. 19.—Whereas the teachers of truth, and their disciples, had no temptation to pervert the gospel; because they lived in a pure and heavenly manner, and looked for the coming of Christ from heaven, ver. 20.—to refashion their present body, (which was humbled, or made mortal by sin,) into the likeness of his own glorious body, at the resurrection, ver. 21.

The Apostle's method of confuting the Judaizers in this Epistle, is worthy of notice. He does not, as in his Epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Hebrews, bring arguments from the writings of Moses and the prophets; but, to the assertions of the Judaizers, he opposes his own affirmations, as an inspired apostle; expresses a just abhorrence of the teachers who corrupted the gospel; and vindicates his own character and qualifications as an apostle. This method he followed, because he knew it was sufficient for establishing the Philippian, who, from the beginning, knew him to be a true apostle of Christ, loved him as their spiritual father, and were sure he would not deceive them.—In those Epistles, in which he confuted the errors of the Judaizers, by arguments from the writings of Moses and the prophets, St. Paul made the churches to which they were sent, and all who should afterwards believe, sensible, not only that he was an apostle, but a learned Jewish doctor, who was well acquainted with the ancient scriptures, and who understood their true meaning.

Ver. 1. Finally,—Rejoice] Some have apprehended here a contrast with ch. ii. 25. 28. where the Apostle tells them he had sent Epaphroditus, that they might rejoice at his coming: as if he had said, "And now I add, that while you are rejoicing in him, I would have you rejoice in the Lord, discerning the interposition of Christ, in his being preserved and restored to you." In this connection, it might have made the conclusion of the second chapter: it however seems more naturally to introduce what follows, thus: "As for what remains, my brethren, let me exhort you, whatever may become of me, or of yourselves, so far as any worldly interest or prospect is concerned, that ye rejoice in the protection and care of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the promises and hopes given us by him. I have already insisted upon them with pleasure, (ch. i. 5, 6. 10, 11. 20, &c. ch. ii. 5. 11.) and to write the same things to you, on such a topic, is not grievous to me, while it is both safe and necessary for you." Some think that the words, *writing the same things*, intimate that St. Paul had written a former Epistle to them, which is now lost; others suppose that they refer to what he had said to them formerly; and that he

only gives some hints at these larger conversations in the following verses.

Ver. 2. Beware of dogs,] This may very possibly be an allusion to Isaiah, lvi. 10—12. Comp. ver. 19. Tit. i. 11, 12. Rom. xvi. 18. Gal. vi. 12, 13. The Jews used to call the Gentiles *dogs*, and perhaps St. Paul, directed by the Spirit of God, may use this language, when speaking of their proud bigots, by way of just retaliation. Comp. Rev. xxii. 15. We read of a custom at Rome, to chain their dogs at the doors of their houses, and to put an inscription over them; "Beware of this dog," to which some think these words refer: but it is more natural to interpret St. Paul's expression from the comparisons used in the Old Testament, rather than from any proverbial speeches among the heathens. *Evil-workers* does not so much mean those who lived wickedly, as those who worked fraudulently and deceitfully. By the *circumcision* is meant either the *excision* (see the introduction to the chapter), or "those who rend and divide the church;" see Rom. xvi. 17, 18. They gloried in being the *περιτομῆν*, the *circumcision*; which name and character St. Paul will not allow them; but claims it for Christians, in the next word, and calls them the *κτετατομῆν*, or *concision*; expressing his contempt of their pretences, and censure of their practices. See 2 Cor. xi. 13.

Ver. 3. We are the circumcision,] That is, "We have that which was signified by circumcision;" for *that is not circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter.* Rom. ii. 28, 29. See also Col. ii. 11. Instead of, *we rejoice in Christ Jesus*, the Greek should be rendered, *we glory, or boast in Christ Jesus*, whom St. Paul considered as the *spirit of the law*, in contradistinction to the *letter of it*. So that the sum of what he says is this: "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in and by Jesus Christ, and have our whole dependance upon him; and to this it was the design of the law to lead men." See Gal. iii. 24. Rom. x. 4.

Ver. 4. If any other man thinketh, &c.] It can scarcely be supposed, that there were absolutely none who could pretend to the same grounds of confidence in the flesh, which St. Paul here mentions. His expression, therefore, is to be limited to such as he had in view. If there was but one person in Philippi, who was endeavouring to seduce them, no doubt he here speaks of him; but if there were more, he may be thought to aim at the principal man among them, for he seems here to speak only of a single person. His meaning therefore is, "If the person who attempts to draw you into Judaism, thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I am able to go beyond him in all his pretences." It is usual with the Apostle to speak in such a covert delicate way of this kind of men. See 1 Cor. iii. 10. 2 Cor. x. 7. 11. xi. 4. xii. 16—21.

Ver. 5. Circumcised the eighth day,] Under *circumcision when eight days old*. Piscator and Homberg: It evidently appears, that the Jews did not only lay a great stress

but ^o that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith :

10 That ^o I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ;

^o Rom. 7. 17. & 7. 21, 22; 24. & 5. 15—19, 21. & 8. 3, 4. & 9. 30. & 10. 4. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Cor. 5. 21. If. 45. 24. & 46. 12, 13. & 61. 10. Jer. 23. 6. & 33. 16. Rev. 19. 8. Gal. 2. 16. 20. 2 Pet. 1. 1. ^o Rom. 4. 25. & 6. 3—6. Gal. 2. 19, 20. Rom. 7. 4. & 8. 2, 11, 17. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 4. 13. ^p Luke, 20. 25. Acts, 26. 7. ^q 1 Tim. 6. 12. Heb. 12. 23. ^r Ver. 13. 14. Hof. 6. 3. Pf. 63. 8. & 42. 1. & 84. 2, 7. Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. ^s Eph. 1. 7. If. 45. 17. ^t John, 12. 32. If. 49. 25. Hof. 2. 19, 20. Pf. 110. 2, 3. & 45. 3—5.

on the rite of circumcision, but on the time of performing it; that is, exactly on the eighth day. This consideration, and the particulars enumerated by St. Paul, must be understood as plain evidences, that the Apostle had more reason to trust in the flesh, than the person upon whom he reflects; and therefore it seems highly probable, that this person was only a profelyte, and not a Jew by birth. We may collect the same from the phrase, *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*; by which he seems to mean, that he was not a *Hellenist Jew*, as probably the person who endeavoured to seduce them was. Comp. Acts, vi. 1. where the *Hellenists* are contra-distinguished from the Hebrews. See also Rom. xi. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 22. Acts, xxiii. 6.

Ver. 6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;*] All that the Apostle can mean here is, that if a zeal for the law were, as the Jews thought it, a ground of confidence, he could lay claim to it with abundant propriety; since his zeal had been so great for it, as to lead him to persecute the Christians, because he thought they dishonoured it. The *righteousness which is in the law*, both here and in ver. 9. refers to the conformity which he lived in to the *ritual or ceremonial part of the Mosaic law*.

Ver. 7. *These I counted loss for Christ.*] That is, “I threw them away, as mariners do their goods, on which they before set a value, lest they should endanger their lives;” in which sense the word *ζημία* is used, Acts, xxvii. 21. We may observe, that St. Paul in this and the following verses carries on an agreeable allegory; in which all the metaphors are taken from *traders or merchants*. The first metaphors that he uses are *profit and loss*. The next lies in the words *cast away*; and the last in the word *arrive or attain*.

Ver. 8. *I count all things but loss*] *I have thrown away all things*:—“Have willingly parted with all my advantages and expectations from the law; that I might gain or secure Christ.” It is not by any means improbable, that a sentence of excommunication might have been pronounced against St. Paul, or at least that his goods might have been confiscated; as we know other believing Hebrews, though probably no one of them so obnoxious to their brethren as himself, were actually treated. (See Heb. x. 33, 34.) And if this were the case, it gives great force to the words, *For whom I have suffered*, &c.

Ver. 9. *And be found in him,*] “Though not only reputation and power, ease and plenty, but even life itself, should be sacrificed to this view, I am happy enough if I may but be found in him, vitally united to him by a true

11 If by any means ^p I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 ^q Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but ^r I follow after, if that I may apprehend ^s that for which also ^t I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

“faith and love, and so taken into his favour and under his protection.”

Ver. 10. *And the power of his resurrection,*] The resurrection of Christ is one of the strongest confirmations of our holy religion; and therefore yields the greatest encouragement to the hopes and expectations of genuine Christians. Hence God is said to *have begotten them again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. 1 Pet. i. 3. Some may perhaps imagine that St. Paul had not here a due regard to order in placing his words, because he speaks of Christ's *resurrection* first, and then of his *sufferings*; but his reason for this probably was, because a lively hope, effected by the consideration of Christ's resurrection, was absolutely necessary to make men willing to be conformed to him in his sufferings.

Ver. 11. *If by any means I might attain*, &c.] “That any way, as it shall please him, I may arrive safe at my desired haven, the resurrection of the just.” Dr. Heylin renders it, *In order to attain to the resurrection of the dead*; that is, says he, the resurrection of the just; for the resurrection of sinners is the second death.

Ver. 12. *Not as though I had already*, &c.] “This I say not as if I had already attained to all that I wish to be, or were already perfected: for I am truly sensible how far I am from that consummate perfection of character, as well as of state, which the gospel teaches me to aspire after: but I pursue it, if by any means I may but reach that height of excellence for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus, whose condescending hand graciously laid hold on me in my mad career, in so extraordinary a manner as you have often heard, and has introduced me into that blessed race in which I am now engaged.” The Apostle here begins a new allegory; nor is it unusual with the most correct writers to pass from one allegory to another: but our version confounds these two allegories by translating both the word *κατατίσσω*, ver. 11. and the word *παύσω*, in the present verse, by the same word *attained*: St. Paul here compares himself to a *racer*, and borrows many terms from the Olympic games, as in several other places of his Epistles. The words rendered *apprehend* and *apprehended* are used in the same *agonistical* sense, 1 Cor. ix. 24. His design is to shew, that he considered not himself as having already gained the victory, or obtained the prize which is the reward of it,—which the Jewish converts seem to have fancied of themselves; but that he was running and striving, and using all proper methods to qualify himself through Divine grace for it. Candidates in the Grecian games, elpe-

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for ^a the prize of the ^b high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, ^a as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing

ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, ^a whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, ^b be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told

^a Pl. 27. 4. & 45. 10. Luke, 9. 11, 62. Heb. 6. 1. 1 Cor. 9. 24, 26. 2 Cor. 5. 16. Ch. 2. 12. Heb. 12. 1, 2. 2 Tim. 4. 7. 1 Tim. 6. 11, 22. Prov. 4. 18. ^b Eph. 1. 4, 5. 1 Pet. 1. 4, 9, 13. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Tit. 2. 13. 2 Cor. 4. 17. & 5. 1. If. 60. 19, 20. 1 John, 3. 2. Col. 3. 4. 1 Thes. 4. 17. Rev. 7. 2. 1 Heb. 7. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 3. ^c Rom. 15. 1. 1 Cor. 2. 6. & 14. 10. Heb. 5. 14. Gal. 5. 1, 10. & 6. 1. ^d Rev. 3. 3. 11. Rom. 12. 15 & 15. 5-7. Gal. 6. 16. Ch. 2. 2. & 1. 27. & 4. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 13. 22. ^e 1 Cor. 4. 16. & 11. 1. 1 Thes. 1. 6. & 2. 12-14. 2 Thes. 3. 7, 9. Ch. 4. 9. Heb. 13. 7, 8. 1 Pet. 5. 3. 1 Tim. 4. 12.

especially when they first presented themselves, were often introduced by some person of established reputation, who at the same time that he spoke as honourably as might be of his friend, urged him to acquit himself with the utmost vigour and resolution;—and it is probable that the latter clause of this verse may allude to that circumstance. See the note on ver. 15.

Ver. 13, 14. *Brethren, I count not myself, &c.] No, my brethren, I do not imagine that I am yet arrived at the goal; but this one thing I do: regardless of what is behind, and intent only to reach what is before, I press forward to the mark, for the prize to which God has called me from above by Christ Jesus.* Heylin. Mr. Peirce thinks the most exact grammatical construction of the words is this, “I press after that one thing for which I have been apprehended by Jesus Christ, that I may apprehend or attain it; neglecting the things behind, and stretching forward to those before. After this one thing (I say) I press, according to the aim I have fixed to myself, that I may obtain the prize of the high calling,” &c. But the construction may be clear enough, by supplying (as in our translation) the words *I do, or I can say*. The Apostle continues his allusion to the Olympic games, and especially the *foot races*, which made the most celebrated part of them; where the prize was placed in a very conspicuous situation, so that the competitors might be animated by having it still in their view. Some interpreters think that the Apostle compares our Lord in this verse to those who stood on an elevated place at the end of the course, calling the racers by their names, and encouraging them, by *holding* out the crown, to exert themselves with vigour. But it seems more consistent to interpret the *high calling*, as alluding to the proclamation by which men were called before the opening of the course to contend for such and such a prize; which answers to the general declaration of the heavenly prize made in the gospel.

Ver. 15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, &c.]* Such is the situation of my own mind, and the ardour of desire with which I am pressing after farther attainments in the Divine life. *Let as many of us therefore as are perfect* in any degree, and initiated, if I may so express it, into the holy mysteries of our religion, into the deep things of God, *who have known him that is from the beginning* (1 John, ii. 13, 14.), attend to this as our great business and aim; and if any of you are otherwise affected,

“if any be unhappily fallen into a remiss and indolent frame, God shall reveal even this unto you, if you sincerely and earnestly ask him. I hope that he will, and I pray that he may give you such views of the crown of glory, the prize of our high calling, as may animate your most vigorous pursuit of it.” In ver. 12. the apostle speaks of himself as *not already perfected*; which is said in opposition to the Jews, and the converts from among them, who flattered themselves, that barely by being under the law they were *made perfect*. Hence he speaks in such a manner to the Galatians, ch. iii. 3. when they were seduced by the Judaizers; *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* In which place by the *flesh* he particularly adverts to the ceremonial law. This notion of the Jews naturally led them into security, and such carelessness of life, as the Apostle judged to be most dangerous. In opposition to them he sets forth his own great solicitude and diligence in the use of all proper means, considering himself as not having yet obtained the prize. This clears the seeming inconsistency between the 12th and the present verse. The *perfection* spoken of in the 12th verse relates to the *reward*;—with respect to which our Saviour himself says, *the third day I shall be perfected*, Luke xiii. 32. And thus the *spirits of just men* are not *made perfect* till the other world, Heb. xii. 23.—We may justly observe, that when an expression of this kind is used to intimate that the greatest adepts in Christianity should be labouring after higher improvements, it must strongly imply the obligations on those in a lower class, to press forward. See Heb. v. 13, 14. 1 Cor. ii. 6.

Ver. 17. *Be followers together of me,*] Here the reason very plainly appears, why he said so much of himself in the foregoing verses; and we may observe, that as he was apprehensive of the danger his Philippians were in from these Judaizers, he labours effectually to discredit them; and shews from the difference there was between his conversation and theirs, how much reason they had to follow and be directed by *him* rather than *them*. Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 16, 17. However, to take off the seeming ostentation of his discourse, he joins others with himself, as examples to them.

Ver. 18. *They are the enemies of the cross]* That is, “enemies to the doctrine of salvation by a dependance upon *Christ crucified*!” for while they directed men to seek salvation by observing the ceremonial law, they took

you often, and now tell you ^c even weeping, *that they are* ^d the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 ^e Whose end is destruction, ^f whose God is their belly, and ^g whose glory is in their shame, who ^h mind earthly things).

20 For ⁱ our conversation is in heaven;

from whence also we ^k look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall ^l change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, ^m according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

^a Ezek. 9. 4. Jer. 9. 1—6. Mic. 7. 1—6. Acts, 20. 19, 29, 31. Rom. 9. 2. ^b Rom. 16. 17. 18. Gal. 2. 21. & 5. 2, 4, 11. & 6. 12. 1 Cor. 1. 18, 23. ^c 2 Cor. 11. 1. 2 Thes. 2. 3, 8. 3 Pet. 2. 1, 3, 12. Rev. 19. 20. & 20. 10. Mat. 24. 51. Luke, 12. 46. ^d Rom. 16. 18. 16. 56. 10—12. Ch. 2. 21. Ezek. 13. 19. & 34. 3. Mic. 3. 5, 11. ^e Hof. 6. 7. 2 Cr. 11. 12. Gal. 6. 13. Tit. 2. 10, 11. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 10, 13, 18. Jude, 8. 12, 16. 1 Tim. 6. 4. ^f Rom. 8. 5, 6. PL 17. 14. & 4. 6. 1 Tim. 6. 5, 9, 10. Tit. 1. 11. 2 Pet. 3. 3, 13, 14. Ezek. 33. 31. & 34. 3, 4. ^g Eph. 2. 6, 9. Col. 1. 5. & 3. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 4. 18. Prov. 15. 24. Heb. 10. 34, 35. ^h 1 Cor. 1. 7. 1 Thes. 1. 10. Tit. 2. 13. Heb. 13. 14. & 9. 28. 2 Tim. 4. 8. ⁱ 1 Cor. 15. 26, 42—44, 49, 51—54. Col. 3. 4. 1 John, 3. 2. Mat. 17. 2. Acts, 6. 15. ^k Eph. 3. 19. 1 Cor. 15. 26, 27. Heb. 7. 25. Mat. 28. 18. 11. 63. 1.

them off from depending solely on Christ crucified, and so made the death of Christ insignificant and useless. See Gal. ii. 21. v. 3, 4. Some however rather understand this as referring to their immoral temper, afterwards described; the end and *design of the cross* being to attract our hearts from earth to heaven, they were *enemies to it*, as being unwilling to comply with that end and design. It is to be feared, that many converts from the Gentiles as well as from the Jews, answered this character; and if they did, it was entirely to the Apostle's purpose to reprove them.

Ver. 19. *Whose end is destruction,*] See 2 Cor. xi. 15. It has been thought that the Apostle has an eye here to what he had observed of these men before, ch. i. 28. and so he may be understood as if he had said, "These men reckon upon your destruction, but they will certainly meet with their own." The next clause implies, that however they pretended to act for the service and honour of God, they were seeking solely their own profit, and prostituting all things for the promoting of a temporary interest. Thus they made a god of themselves, or of *their own belly*. See Rom. xvi. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Tit. i. 11. St. Paul's aim and behaviour were directly opposite; who did all things for the edification of the churches, without seeking his own temporal advantage, as he often declares in his epistles, and that with a tacit reflection upon these men for their behaviour. By *shame and earthly things* the Apostle refers to their glorying in the indulgence of those earthly and sensual passions and pursuits which are a *shame* to the rational mind.

Ver. 20. *For our conversation is in heaven;*] They who have occasion to make use of this text, commonly attempt to mend our translation, asserting that the word *πολίτευμα* should not be rendered *conversation*, but *citizenship*. Thus Beza, the common French translation, and that printed at Mons, have rendered it. Diodati agrees with ours, but puts *citizenship* in the margin. The Vulgate, Syriac, Low Dutch, and Castalian render it as we do; and after all that the critics have said upon this matter, our own rendering seems preferable to the other. It must be confessed that the word, being derived from *πόλις*, a city, is often used to signify such actions as relate to the administration and government of it; but nothing is more common, than for words in time to be used in a laxer and more general sense than their etymology will account for. This is clearly the case in the verb *πολιτευομαι*, which in like manner related at first to a *civil administration*, but was afterwards used to signify any manner of living and conversing: so it is used

by St. Paul, ch. i. 27. and so Acts xxiii. 1. and in this sense it is also applied by the classics. Now the rendering in our translation appears best for these reasons, 1. As it stands here in opposition to the foregoing character, and especially the last part of it,—*who mind earthly things*. It is most agreeable therefore to understand him to describe his own character, as one *who minded heavenly things*, or whose conversation was about them. 2. This is confirmed by the parallel place, Col. iii. 1, 2. *For our conversation is in heaven*, will be the same as, *we seek or mind the things above*. 3. This suits best with his design, as he is recommending himself to them as an example of *walking*, or of *conversation*, ver. 17. *Be ye followers together of me, and mark*, or observe with attention, *those who walk so, as you have us for an example*; and in this 20th verse he gives a reason why they should follow his example,—because it was through grace a very good one; *for our conversation*, that is *our walking, is in heaven*; and that this 20th verse is clearly connected with the 17th, appears by the conjunction *καὶ*, or *for*, at the beginning of it; the 18th and 19th verses being to be read in a parenthesis. 4. This *conversation in heaven* comprehends briefly all that he had said of himself, ver. 10—14. and as in those verses he makes not the least allusion to a *citizenship*, but his whole discourse is concerning the manner of his life and conversation: it is but reasonable to understand him as speaking of that alone in this verse.

Ver. 21. *Who shall change our vile body, &c.*] Instead of *our vile body*, the Greek would be better translated *our mean, humble, lowly body*: τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν; literally *the body of our humiliation*. *Flesh and blood*, in their present state, not being fit to inherit the kingdom of God, there is a necessity that the bodies of those who shall inherit it should undergo a great change: such a change will be made in the bodies of the dead saints at the resurrection, when they shall be raised incorruptible; but as to the saints who shall be *alive* at that time, since they undergo not such a change by the resurrection, there must be somewhat equivalent to it; that is, by the mighty power of our Saviour they shall undergo such a change, as shall in an instant qualify them to inherit the kingdom of God. See 1 Cor. xv. 50—54. The bodies of believers at present, and till that change shall be made, bear the image of the *first Adam*, and are in a low and mean condition; but they shall then bear the image of Christ, the *last or second Adam*, who is *the Lord from heaven*; 1 Cor. xv. 45—49. This is expressed here by our bodies being conformed to his glorious body. The reason of his speaking in this case of *Christ's subduing* all

CHAP. IV.

From particular admonitions he proceedeth to general exhortations; shewing how he rejoiced at their liberality towards him lying in prison, not so much for the supply of his wants, as for the grace of God in them: and so concludeth with prayer and salutations.

[Anno Domini 62.]

THEREFORE^a, my brethren^b dearly beloved and longed for,^c my joy and

crown, so^d stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche,^e that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I entreat thee also,^f true yoke-fellow,^g help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in^h the book of life.

^a Ch. 3. 20, 21. ² Pet. 3. 11, 14. ^b Ch. 1. 8, 25. & 2. 24, 26. ^c Ch. 2. 16—18. ² Cor. 1. 14, 24. ¹ Thes. 2. 19, 20. ^d Ch. 1. 27. ¹ Cor. 15. 1. & 16. 13. ¹ Pet. 5. 9, 12. ² Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 23. ³ Rev. 3. 11. ¹ Cor. 15. 58. ¹ Luke, 1. 74, 75. ¹ Pf. 125. 1. ^e ¹ Cor. 1. 10. ² Cor. 13. 11. ¹ See ch. 2. 2. & 3. 16. ^f Ch. 2. 23. ¹ Col. 1. 7. & 4. 7, 11. ³ John, 8. ² Cor. 6. 9. ^g Rom. 16. 2, 4, 9, 12, 21. ^h Tit. 2. 3. ¹ Rev. 3. 5. & 13. 8. & 20. 12. & 21. 27. ¹ Pf. 69. 29. ¹ 11. 4. 3. ¹ Pf. 87. 6. ¹ Ezek. 13. 9. ¹ Dan. 12. 1. ¹ Exod. 32. 32.

all things to himself, is to be drawn from 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. according to which, death is to be considered as the last enemy to be conquered; and so when this is subdued, all is subdued, and Christ will bestow upon his saints a complete victory over it, freeing them for ever from being subject and liable to it. See the note on the first verse of the next chapter. Instead of *working*, some read *energy*.

Inferences.—Christians have need to be often warned of seducers! Faithful ministers should never be weary of cautioning them, or of putting them on the most diligent watch against those who carp and cavil against the purity of the gospel, and are themselves workers of iniquity, as well as enemies to holiness, at the same time that they are doctrinally as well as practically grievous enemies to the merit, virtue, and honour of a crucified Jesus. They trust in something of their own for justification before God, and yet are sensual and carnal, and even glory in their enormities, and so cut themselves off from all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and entail everlasting destruction upon themselves. But O how happy is it to be circumcised in heart, to be spiritual and evangelical worshippers of God, to rejoice and glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to place no confidence in external privileges and zeal for them, no, nor in our own moral or religious righteousness as the ground of acceptance. None of these are to be set in competition with Christ, as opposed to the saving knowledge of him, and being found in union with him. And yet how carefully should we guard against neglecting sanctification or holiness, which is as necessary to our enjoying God as justification! And how desirous ought we to be of having such a knowledge of Christ, as will be a means of deriving virtue from his death and resurrection, to make us conformable to him in both, by dying unto sin and living unto God! Though some believers are more advanced in sight and experience than others, yet they all ought to be of the same mind with respect to these important points; and, as far as they have attained, should walk together in brotherly love, and according to the rule of God's word: and if there be any thing of less consequence, in which their sentiments differ, they should bear with one another, and leave it to God to convince those who are mistaken as to such things, after all proper methods have been unsuccess-

fully tried, in the spirit of meekness, to set them right. How ambitious should we be of carefully observing and copying after those, who, like the Apostle, set us the most laudable example; whose hearts, affections, and conversation are in heaven, where Jesus our Saviour lives in all his glory; and whence believers look, with longing desire and hope, for his return to take them up thither. And O what an amazingly happy change will he then make upon these frail, contemptible, and mortal bodies! He will then form them into the likeness of his own most glorious body, by an act of Divine Omnipotence which surmounts all difficulties, and by which he himself is, and will prove to be able to vanquish death and all his enemies, and the enemies of all his faithful saints!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Into almost every church had the Judaizing teachers crept, and caused much trouble to the great Apostle. The Philippians had been attacked by them, and needed a caution against their seductions.

1. He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord. *Finally, my brethren*, after what I have said for your comfort, *rejoice in the Lord* as your Redeemer and Saviour, who has already so richly blessed you, and is willing to bestow upon you all the inestimable privileges of his gospel.

2. He warns them against the false teachers. *To write the same things to you*, which I have often spoken, and Epaphroditus has now in charge to deliver, *to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe* to be reminded of your danger, and kept on your guard. *Beware of dogs*, those cringing zealots, who fawn to ingratiate themselves with you, but design to introduce divisions among you, to bite and devour you—greedy, impudent, and worthless. *Beware of evil workers*, whose practices declare the badness of their principles. *Beware*, again I say, *of the circumcision*, no name being contemptible enough for them, who, urging this abolished rite, would rend the peace of the church, would introduce confusion, and cut off the Gentiles from the privileges of the gospel.

3. He describes true Christianity. *For we are the circumcision*, really in covenant with God, and entitled by faith in Christ to all the spiritual blessings and privileges; *which worship God in the spirit*; not with the outward pomp of ceremonial rites, but with the heart, according to the gospel insti-

4 ¹ Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 ^k Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

¹ Ch. 1. 1. 2. 8. Rom. 12. 12. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Thes. 5. 16. Pf. 140. 2. Hab. 3. 18. Il. 61. 10.
² Pet. 4. 7. 2 Pet. 3. 8-14. Mat. 24. 42, 44. Heb. 10. 25. Jam. 5. 8, 9. Rev. 1. 3. & 22. 10.

^k Luke, 21. 34. Tit. 3. 2.

institutions; *and rejoice* or glory in *Christ Jesus*, as our only hope towards God, placing our whole dependance upon him, and happy in the great atonement which he has made for us; *and have no confidence in the flesh*, expect not acceptance with God, on account of any privileges of descent from Abraham. *Note*, (1.) All true Christians live in the constant worship of God, private and public; and that not formally, but in spirit and in truth. (2.) We must despair of ourselves, and renounce all dependance upon our own doings and duties, before we can exercise faith in Jesus, and know the joys of his salvation.

2dly, None had more outward privileges than St. Paul; but none more heartily renounced them, and fled to a better hope. His own example he proposes therefore for their imitation.

1. If any man might have confidence in outward privileges, he had as many, or more, than any of the Judaizing teachers; a native Israelite; a descendant from Benjamin, the son of the beloved Rachel, the tribe that clave to the house of David and the temple, when the rest revolted; on father and mother's side a Hebrew of pure extraction; circumcised according to the law; brought up after the strictest sect a Pharisee, in the observance both of the rites of the law, and the traditions of the elders; a zealot for Judaism, even so far as to be a bitter persecutor of Christianity; and in his outward conduct and conversation blameless and unexceptionable.

2. All this he renounced for Christ. *But what things* I then thought *were gain* to me, and raised me in excellence above other men; *those I counted loss* for Christ, renouncing them utterly, assured if I trusted upon them for acceptance, I must be undone, and therefore resting on Christ, on his infinite merit alone. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss*. I remain in the same sentiments, disclaiming all dependance upon my present as well as past doings and duties; *for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*; nothing else is to be compared with this: since I have known him as my Saviour, I want nothing more, except more of his Divine nature; *for whom I have suffered the loss of all things which this world holds dear; and do count them but dung*, contemptible offals, fit to be cast only on a dunghill; *that I may win Christ*, and become partaker of the great salvation which he has purchased for his faithful saints; *and be found in him*, as my city of refuge, my divine substitute and surety, my availing plea at the bar of God; *not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law*, conscious how little it would bear the scrutiny; *but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*;—faith, which enables us to cast ourselves without reserve on the atonement and infinite merit of Christ, as the sole ground of our acceptance with God—faith, which draws down righteousness out of the fulness of Christ, yea grace for grace. *Note*, Whatever we depend upon for justification, except Christ alone, will assuredly prove to be our eternal loss.

3. The Apostle desired to know Christ, not only as the only ground of, and his only plea for, acceptance with God, but as the Author of all spiritual life and eternal blessedness—*That I may know him and experience the power of his resurrection*, as the glorious Head of vital influence to all his faithful people; *and the fellowship of his sufferings*, daily experiencing the crucifixion of the old man, and willingly taking up my cross, however painful; *being made conformable unto his death*; dying unto sin, as Christ died for it; or ready to lay down my life for the gospel, whenever I may be called thereto: *if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*; raised to immortal life and glory in body as well as soul, and reaching the happy port of eternal rest, whither I steer my course. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, or perfected*, as I desire it to be; *but I follow after*, eager to be at the goal, *If that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*; holding fast by that blessed Jesus, who first laid hold on me in my way to Damascus, and trusting on his power and grace to bring me to the eternal life which he has promised to bestow on all his faithful saints. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended*, or to be arrived at that grand summit of perfection; *but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind*, resting in no present attainments, *and reaching forth unto those things which are before*, after higher measures of grace, *I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*; with heaven in my eye, I vigorously pursue my course, bending forwards eagerly as I run, and stretching out my arms to seize the crown of righteousness, which Jesus bestows, and is to be won only through the grace and strength which he supplies. *Note*, (1.) To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to experience his quickening efficacy upon our souls, and to be raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, as his dead body was raised from the grave to the life of glory. (2.) They who think they have grace enough, evidently shew that they have none at all. (3.) Christ must apprehend us first before we can apprehend him; but he is willing to do this for every truly penitent soul. (4.) Heaven is the prize in view; happy the soul which reaches that goal.

3dly, The Apostle exhorts them to be united in love, and to be like-minded with him. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect*, as enjoy perfect love, (see 1 John, iv. 17, 18.)—are so far advanced in the Christian state, *be thus minded*: *and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, and differ from me in sentiment, God shall reveal even this unto you*, who earnestly seek to know the truth, and clear up to your satisfaction whatever may be yet dark or doubtful. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule of God's word*; *let us mind the same thing*, wherein we have all agreed. *Note*, lesser differences of opinion should make no disunion of heart; we must wait together on God, that he may instruct us in all his holy will.

4thly,

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

1 Pt. 5. 22. Prov. 3. 5, 6. & 16. 3. Mat. 6. 25, 33, 34. Luke, 12. 22. 1 Cor. 7. 32. 1 Tim. 6. 8, 17. 1 Pet. 5. 7. Pf. 37. 4, 5.

4thly, With warnings and exhortations he closes this chapter.

1. He warns them against the false teachers, whose character he describes. *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,* concerned deeply for them, and jealous for you, *that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ,* both in their principles and their practice; their lives being as contrary to the spirit of purity, as their dependence on circumcision and Mosaic rites is derogatory to the grace of the gospel; unwilling to profess, or suffer for, a crucified Jesus: *whose end is destruction,* their errors and immoralities bringing upon them eternal ruin: *whose god is their belly;* serving and indulging their sensual appetites, as their chief happiness: *and whose glory is in their shame;* boasting themselves in their evil ways, and proud of their privileges, which only serve to cover them with confusion, while they behave so unsuitably thereunto; *who mind earthly things,* have their groveling minds ever fixed on the interests, pleasures, and honours of this miserable world. *Note,* (1.) They who make their belly their god, glory in their sins, and live after the fashion of the world, will infallibly find the end of their ways to be the destruction of both body and soul. (2.) It is a bitter grief to the faithful, when they behold any that bear the Christian name a dishonour to their holy profession.

2. He exhorts them to copy the good examples which he and others shewed them. *Brethren, be followers together of me,* as I am of Christ; *and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample,* and adorn the gospel that they profess. *For our conversation is in heaven;* our commerce and concerns all lie there; *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,* to come at the last day, and bring us home to his blessed Self; *who shall change our vile body,* that now bears the most humiliating marks of weakness and infirmity, and will shortly be loathsome in the dust; *that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;* when death, the last of his enemies, shall be swallowed up in victory; and all his faithful saints shall rise and shine, and reign with their exalted Head in glory everlasting.

CHAP. IV.

TO the foregoing condemnation of the doctrines and practices of the Judaizers, the Apostle, as the application of his discourse, subjoined, in the beginning of this chapter, an exhortation to the Philippians, to stand firm in the belief of the doctrine of Christ, and in the constant practice of his precepts.

In what follows, St. Paul proceeds to a new subject. Euodias and Syntyche, two Christian women of note at Philippi, having differed on some points of doctrine, or practice, the Apostle besought them to lay aside their disputes, and be united to each other in affection, ver. 2.—And to bring about their reconciliation, he requested a person in Philippi, whom he calls his true yoke-fellow,

to help them to compose their differences; because they were sincere in the belief of the gospel, and had formerly assisted himself and Clement, and other faithful preachers, in the work of Christ, ver. 3.—Next, he gave the Philippians directions concerning their temper and conduct as Christians. They were to cherish spiritual joy, moderation, freedom from anxious cares, and to be often employed in prayer, ver. 4—6.—All these graces and virtues they were to practise, according as they had learned them from him, and had seen them exemplified in him, ver. 8, 9.—Then, in very delicate terms, he thanked the Philippians for their affection to him, expressed by the care that they had taken to supply his wants, ver. 10.—But lest, from the warmth of his gratitude, they might fancy that he had been out of measure distressed with his poverty, he told them, that the want of the necessaries of life was not an evil insupportable to him; for he had learned in every state to be content; and was able to bear all sorts of distress, through Jesus Christ, ver. 11 - 13.—yet he commended them for attending to his state, ver. 14.—and told them that he accepted their present the more willingly, because they were the only church that he had received any thing from while he preached in Macedonia, ver. 15.—From which they would see, that he was not covetous of gifts; and that he received their present only because he sought from them pious actions, as the fruit of his labours among them, which, in the end, would abound to their own advantage, ver. 17.—Knowing, however, that it would give them joy, he told them that, through their liberal gift sent by Epaphroditus, he now had every thing he wished, and was filled with comfort, ver. 18.—Withal, to encourage them in such good works, he assured them that God would supply all their wants abundantly, ver. 19.—In which persuasion he addressed a short doxology to God, ver. 20.

The Apostle having, in this handsome manner, thanked the Philippian church for their present, he desired the bishops and deacons to salute every saint at Philippi in his name, and sent them the salutation of the brethren, who were with him at the writing of this letter, ver. 21.—adding, that all the saints in Rome saluted them, but chiefly they of Cæsar's household, ver. 22.: for the gospel being made known in the palace by means of the Apostle's bonds, chap. i. 12, 13. it had made such an impression on some of the emperor's domestics, that they embraced and professed the Christian faith. Having, therefore, friends in the palace, the Apostle hoped to be released through their good offices, under the blessing of God, chap. i. 25. ii. 24. Nor was he disappointed in his expectation; for, after having been confined two years, he was set at liberty.—St. Paul concluded this Epistle as usual, with his apostolical benediction, sealed with an *Amen*, to shew his sincerity in all the things that he had written, ver. 23.

Ver. 1. Therefore, my brethren. &c.] There is no more reason for making this the beginning of a new chapter, than there would be for disjoining the last verse of 1 Cor. xv. (in a sense exactly parallel to this,) from the preceding discourse

7 And ^a the peace of God, which passeth minds ^b through Christ Jesus.
all understanding, shall keep your hearts and 8 Finally, brethren, ^c whatsoever things

^a John, 14. 27. & 16. 33. Rom. 5. 1, 10. Eph. 2. 14. Col. 3. 15. Pf. 119. 165. Is. 26. 3. & 27. 5. & 54. 10. ^b Jude, 1. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
^c Rom. 12. 17. & 13. 12.

discourse on the resurrection, with which it is so beautifully and properly connected. The variety of words here used by the Apostle is remarkable,—*My brethren,—dearly beloved, and longed for;—my joy and crown*; repeating again one of the terms at the end of the verse, as though he thought he could never apply words enough to express the greatness of his love and tenderness to them. The word *so* refers to his immediately foregoing discourse; “*So stand fast* as I have exhorted you: follow this my example which I have earnestly recommended to you; and be accordingly solicitous, in defiance of all the insinuations of such as would seduce you, to persevere in your dependence on Christ, and to press after that state of future happiness which he will shortly bestow upon his saints.” But since the word may be supposed to denote a continued and persevering posture, it seems not unreasonable to allow, that he may herein have a respect to their past behaviour, and the steadfastness for which he had before commended them.

Ver. 3. True yoke-fellow,] My genuine associate. Doddridge. Heylin reads the clause, *I beseech thee also, my faithful partner, to assist them both, for they assisted me, &c.* Some have supposed that by the word *σὺζυγῆ*, St. Paul means his wife; but as the word in the original is masculine, waving all other arguments, it cannot be taken in that sense. It is probable that this was an officer of considerable dignity and authority in the church at Philippi, perhaps husband to one of the pious women here mentioned. As women’s preaching was so expressly forbidden by St. Paul, we must conclude, that it was in some other way that these good women were helpful to him in the gospel; not so much by ministering to his person, though that, no doubt, they were ready to do as they had opportunity; but by such services as suited their sex and station, and by the intelligence which they might give him of the state of religion among their female acquaintance, their children, and other branches of their families.

Ver. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway:] The Apostle, in this advice, seems to have a respect to the suffering condition in which it appears, by other passages in the Epistle, that he considered them. This is confirmed by the strain of his advice in the next verses. See ch. ii. 18. iii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 16.

Ver. 5. Let your moderation be known] Let your meekness, &c.—The Lord is nigh you. Both the parts of this verse shew, that St. Paul considers the Philippians in a state of persecution. *Gentleness, or meekness,* (which is the import of the original *τὸ ἐπιεικὲς*;) was peculiarly suited hereto; and the *Lord’s being at hand*, was a proper motive to excite them to bear their sufferings with such temper. And as the adversaries against whom, at least principally, he encourages them, were the Jews, or Judaizing converts, the *Lord’s being at hand* may well enough be interpreted, of the overthrow which the Lord would suddenly bring upon the Jews; which, by the destruction of

the temple, and the abolishing the greatest part of the Jewish service, would, in a manner, put an end to their contest, as well as be a signal vengeance taken on the most virulent enemies of the Christian cause.

Ver. 6. With thanksgiving,] When St. Paul directs them to join thanksgiving with prayer and supplication, in their suffering condition, he appears to have the same design before noticed; namely, to divert them from the frightful view of persecution, and to put them in mind, as he does ch. i. 29, 30. that their being called hereunto was a gracious gift, for which they ought to be thankful. Instead of, *be careful for nothing*, it would be more proper to read, with Dr. Heylin, *be solicitous for nothing*; “*Whatever your danger or wants may be, do not distract yourselves with an anxious care about them.*”

Ver. 7. And the peace of God, &c.] This expression is only found here and in Col. iii. 15. In both some understand it of that *peaceable temper* which God hath commanded; but it seems much more easy and natural to understand it of that *peace* which we have *with God*. St. Paul is here arming the Philippians against persecution; nor could any thing be a greater support to them under it, than the peace of God thus understood; for the sense of it will make the heaviest afflictions and pressures sit easy upon us. *Having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we may well rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations; nor will our hope make us ashamed.* It will be so far from it, that it will fill us with boldness and resolution, *when the love of God, that is, the sense of his love, which is equivalent to the peace of God,—is shed abroad in our hearts,* Rom. v. 1—5. Indeed, a peaceable and quiet temper will be a support and comfort to a man under his troubles, when he considers that he has done nothing to provoke men, and that their fury and wrath against him is without cause. But this is inconsiderable in comparison of the support which we shall have from a sense of God’s favour, and his being at peace with us: and the commendation here given of the *peace of God*, that it *passeth all understanding*, seems to suit better with this sense than the other. The same is, perhaps, confirmed by that clause, *through Christ Jesus*; and that, whether it be joined with the *peace of God*, or with the *keeping their hearts and minds*. Finally, the connection here may be thought to lead us to this sense. They were, under their troubles, to cast their care upon God, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; and when they did so, the peace of God that passeth all understanding would keep their minds; that is, by guarding against dissidence and distrust, and committing themselves to, and relying upon the favour of God, they would be secure of his favour; the sense of which would make them easy and happy. See John, xiv. 27. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Ver. 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things, &c.] The reader will find in the *Inferences* a complete exposition of this beautiful and comprehensive passage.

are true, whatsoever things *are* ^p honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 ^a Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the ^r God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your ^s care of me ^{*} hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 ^r Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 ^a I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to

be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things ^x through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, ^y that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now, ye Philippians, know also, that ^z in the beginning of the gospel, ^z when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in ^b Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 ^c Not because I desire a gift: but I desire ^d fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But ^e I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, ^f an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

19 But my God shall ^g supply all your need ^h according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

^p Or venerable. 2 Cor. 8. 21. ^r Theff. 4. 4, 5. & 5. 23. Eph. 4. 21—32. Col. 3. 5—27. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Pet. 1. 3—9. Mat. 5. 24—26. Ch. 2. 14—16. ^a Jan. 1. 27. Ch. 3. 17. 1 Cor. 4. 16. & 11. 1. 1 Theff. 1. 6. & 2. 10—14. 2 Theff. 3. 9. ^r Rom. 15. 30. & 16. 20. 1 Cor. 14. 33. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Theff. 5. 23. Heb. 13. 5, 20, 21. 1 Pet. 4. 10. 2 Theff. 2. 16, 17. & 3. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 58. If. 46. 4. ^s 2 Cor. 11. 9. Gal. 6. 6. Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 11, 14. ^{*} Or is revived. ^t Gen. 28. 20. Job, 1. 21. Mat. 6. 31—34. 1 Tim. 6. 6, 8, 9. Heb. 13. 5. & 10. 34. ^u 1 Cor. 4. 9—13; 2 Cor. 6. 4—10. & 11. 23—27. 2 Tim. 3. 10, 11. Act. 20. 23, 24. ^v If. 45. 24. & 40. 29—31. Zech. 10. 11. John, 15. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 3. 5. & 12. 9, 10. ^w Ch. 1. 7. 2 Cor. 1. 7. Heb. 13. 3. Rom. 15. 27. ^x Mark, 1. 1. Act. 11. 15. 1 John, 2. 7. ^y Act. 16. 12. & 17. 14. 2 Cor. 11. 8, 9. ^z Act. 17. 1—9. 1 Theff. 2. 9. 2 Theff. 3. 8, 9. ^{aa} Ver. 11. 1 Cor. 9. 13—15. 2 Cor. 12. 14. 15. 1 Tim. 3. 3. Tit. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 2. See Ch. 1. 19. ^{ab} Rom. 15. 28. 1 Cor. 9. 14. 2 Cor. 9. 9—15. Tit. 3. 14. ^{ac} Or I have received. ^{ad} Gen. 33. 11. 1 Cor. 3. 27. ^{ae} Ch. 2. 25. 2 Cor. 9. 12. Heb. 13. 16. ^{af} Pl. 23. 1—6. & 34. 11. & 146. 7—9. ^{ag} & 68. 10. Prov. 8. 21. Jer. 31. 25. 2 Cor. 9. 8. Pl. 41. 1—3. ^{ah} Eph. 1. 7. & 2. 7. & 3. 16, 19. Pl. 69. 16. & 86. 5, 15. & 130. 7. Prov. 8. 18, 19. Eph. 3. 19. Col. 1. 19. John, 1. 14, 16.

Ver. 9. The God of peace] So called, on account of his affording us peace with himself; as he is called *the God of all grace*, 1 Pet. v. 10. on account of all the favours that he bestows upon us. See Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Theff. v. 23.

Ver. 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly,] The Apostle uses a very skilful way here of commending the generosity of his benefactors; whereby he signifies, not only that they had done their duty, but that the Lord had favoured them, by stirring them up to it; and that they had given him occasion of much thankfulness to the Lord. The original, which we render, *Wherein ye were also careful*, is doubtful; and may signify, *For whom ye were also careful*: or it may be taken, in the sense of our translators, — *in which matter ye were careful*. St. Chrysostom's explanation of the last clause is, — “But you wanted an ability *to supply me.*”

Ver. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want:] *Nor do I speak upon the account of my want.* He had told them, in the verse before, that he rejoiced greatly in the revival of their care for him; and here he presents their mistaking the true cause of his joy.

Ver. 12. I am instructed] “I find myself initiated, as it were, into this great mystery.” This is well known to be the peculiar sense of the word *μεμύνηται*; and it seems as if the Apostle, by the choice of this peculiar word, meant to intimate to his Greek readers, how much he

esteemed the good dispositions of mind here spoken of, beyond all their boasted instructions, whatever mysteries they might be supposed to contain. See Doddridge, Grotius, and Stockius.

Ver. 15. In the beginning of the gospel,] That is, when he first preached the gospel among the Philippians. See ch. i. 5. The next verse shews, that the clause, *when I departed*, &c. should be rendered, *when I was departing*, &c. Thessalonica was itself in Macedonia, and therefore he had not departed from Macedonia, when they sent to him in Thessalonica; but he was then about to leave that country, to preach the gospel elsewhere, and so needed assistance in order to it.

Ver. 16. Ye sent once and again, &c.] It appears by 1 Theff. ii. 9. and 2 Theff. iii. 7—9. that it was not to the liberality of the inhabitants of that city, but chiefly to the labour of his own hands, that St. Paul owed his subsistence during his abode among them. St. Chrysostom remarks judiciously upon this place, “That it is a great commendation of the Philippians, that when St. Paul resided in the metropolis, [Thessalonica,] he should receive no assistance from the inhabitants of that city, while generous contributions were made to him from the little city of Philippi.”

Ver. 19. But my God shall supply] *And my God.* This is to be understood in the nature of a wish, or as expressive of what

20 Now ¹ unto God and our Father be that are of Cæsar's household.
glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 ^k Salute every faint in Christ Jesus. 23 ^m The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
The brethren which are with me greet you. with you all. Amen.

22 ¹ All the faints salute you, chiefly they ¶ *It was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus.*

Rom. 10. 27. Eph. 3. 21. Jude, 25. Pl. 72. 19. ^k Rom. xvi. 1 Cor. 16. 19—21. 2 Cor. 13. 12, 13. ¹ Gal. 1. 2. Ch. 1. 13.
^m See Rom. 16. 20, 24. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Col. 4. 18. 1 Thes. 5. 28. 2 Thes. 3. 18. 2 Tim. 4. 22. Tit. 3. 15. Philem. 25. Heb. 13. 25.

what was the matter of his prayer for them. Many copies and versions read it in the optative mood; and may my God supply. Observe further, he says not *our God*, but *my God*; because he is speaking of God's recompensing to them the kindness which they had shewn to him, as his servant; it was therefore most proper to mention the relation which God stood in to him, as that would be a means of the divine regard to those who had done him good.

Ver. 20. Now unto God and our Father] Now unto our God and Father. Peirce and Doddridge.

*Ver. 21. Salute every faint] The Syriac reads, "every one who has acquired holiness by Jesus Christ." As the brethren here stand contradistinguished to the saints, ver. 22. we must understand the brethren in office, or the ministers.**

Inferences on ver. 8. of this chapter.—It would be needless to lay down particular rules of morality, directly referring to every possible case that may happen in human life; since the cases themselves are almost infinite, and continually varying in some circumstance or other: all therefore that can be expected in the most improved and complete moral system, is, that to supply the place of this vast multiplicity of distinct and minute directions, there be certain general characters, describing the proper dispositions, behaviour, and duty of men; and that these characters have a clear and determinate meaning, and are easy to be applied to particular cases by a common capacity.

St. Paul's words, in the verse now under consideration, being taken in this sense, will be found eminently useful: they not only suppose the unalterable difference of good and evil, and give us a noble and perfect summary of the whole of holiness, virtue, and moral goodness; but the marks therein proposed, to enable us to judge rightly in all circumstances, are obvious and infallible.

Every one of these branches,—*whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report*, deserve our constant and strict regard, considered as general rules; and are always proper to influence and determine our conduct. By the *things* which are true, in this large sense, are meant those habits, and that course of life and manners, which are agreeable to the renewed state of man through grace; and which are suitable to the rank and character that we sustain in the universe, and to the relations that we bear, and the various obligations we are under, to other beings. Now, to assert that this is one invariable standard, to which believers are obliged to conform, is only asserting, in other words, that they are all bound to live and act like new-born creatures, like Christ, who is the Truth itself, and not like different beings from what they really are, through the grace of God; and that they are bound to have exactly

the same consideration of their fellow-creatures, according to the circumstances in which they are placed, and to treat them in the same manner, according to their measure and station, as Christ would have treated them in like circumstances. And the contrary scheme supposes, that we are at full liberty, upon every start of humour, every impulse, or headstrong appetite, to violate the settled order of society; and that monstrous and unnatural characters are equally to be approved, with those which are formed on the strictest rules of grace and truth.

Secondly, By *whatsoever things are honest*, or, as the original word signifies, *grave, decent, venerable*,—are meant things not affected and formal, nor morose and splenetic, nor reclude and unsociable; (for these are the natural properties of peevishness, discontent, and pride;) but such a conduct as springs from serious reflection, as argues a calm and steady temper;—and is therefore *decent*, because becoming the importance and dignity of the renewed man; and *venerable*, as it both tends to create, and deserves respect from our fellow-creatures.

From what has been said, it necessarily follows, that it must be our indispensable duty to adhere constantly to *whatever things are just*; i. e. in the unrestrained and general acceptance of the term, *right and fit in themselves*;—and to *whatsoever things are pure*, or which have a direct and certain tendency to perfect our superior intelligent frame; for if things are *right in themselves*, because they correspond with the great plan of redemption laid down by the Triune God, and, in some sense, with the original scheme of the universe; if the same things are likewise *pure*, because they preserve the comeliness and true honour of regenerate nature uncorrupted, to the glory of the grace of God;—every obligation that lies upon us to conform our actions to the truth of things, must, of course, infer an equal degree of obligation to right action: and all the ties to which we are bound, by virtue of our union to God and his saints, by the power of his grace, to preserve the complexion of our minds and our moral faculties fair and unspotted, in order to behave with a *decent gravity*, and render regenerate nature *venerable*—must also be considered as so many indissoluble bonds of duty, to cultivate *universal purity* of dispositions, affections, and manners.

If, again, there are any *things* in themselves *lovely*, it can admit of no possible dispute, whether they be the just objects of our esteem and choice. To say of characters, that they are *lovely*, and that they *deserve our love*, is only expressing the self-same idea by different terms; and to say that they *deserve our love*, and therefore ought to be delighted in; and that, because they ought to be delighted in, they should be dili-

* See Grotius, Hammond, Lardner, Michaelis, Peirce, Doddridge, Whitby, Heylin, Pyle, Gaaker, Beza, Blackwall, Wetstein, Mill, Fleming, Scott, Sherlock, Bos, Elly, Burnet, Howe, Calmet, Plutarch, Castalio, Diolati, Eudæus, Dunlope, West, Wolfius, Bengelius, Dumont, and Stockius.

gently and constantly improved and cultivated;—this again is only laying down a plain principle, and asserting the necessary consequences which result from it.

Finally, we have another right general rule of conduct, *Whatever things are of good report, — think on these things.* By which we are not to understand those actions which suit the taste and genius of the country where we live, and are admired from the force of education and habit, or because they agree with opinions and prejudices received from our ancestors;—but such actions only as have universally a good report in all Christian countries, however disagreeing in peculiar sentiments, customs, and forms of religion. Whatever is of this kind, it may fairly be presumed has a solid foundation in the will of God, and the original frame of things. Nor indeed can we pretend to account for this agreement of sentiment, and harmony of applause, with any appearance of reason, otherwise than by supposing the intrinsic and immutable excellency of the things themselves; and that there is one original superior Power, which, with respect to general rules of eternal use and importance to all, dictates to all alike; and is therefore the light, the voice, the law of God, in his creature and subject man; and is fully displayed in the revealed word, and, through the grace of the Divine Spirit, may operate effectually in the hearts of the fallen sons of men, and renew them after the image of God.

Having thus considered the Apostle's argument in a general view, it may be proper briefly to point out the particular graces and virtues more directly included in each of the above characters.

And, 1. It is obvious that the Apostle, by the things that are true, intends to recommend the virtues of truth and fidelity; that is, sincerity in all our professions of reverence and duty to God, and of respect and service to our fellow-creatures; the being true to our promises, contracts, friendships, and discharging with diligence and care every trust reposed in us;—the contrary vices to which are, dissimulation, deceitful compliment, lying, fraud, treachery,—which are infallible indications of a selfish and base disposition, and the source of endless confusion in societies.

2. In the things that are grave, decent, and venerable, are particularly included a calm, composed temper, free from the perturbation of excessive passions; an uniform and unshaken resolution to adhere to the principles of truth and right, and that sedateness and dignity of behaviour, which is the result of inward regularity—of that harmony of the powers of the soul, which Divine Grace alone can establish within us. To these instances of venerable conduct, are opposed a slavish subjection to appetite, which renders human nature despicable;—a fickle, fluctuating temper, levity, vanity, and ridiculous affectation;—those unguarded familiarities which lessen our weight and influence, and, in short, all such deportment as is unsuitable to our peculiar situation in life, and tends to disgrace it in the judgment of the genuine people of God.

3. Under the next head are comprehended all the different branches of justice: the distinct offices of justice are, indeed, various, as men's conditions and characters differ; but the general obligations and the general rules are one and the same; which may easily be reduced to that admirable maxim of our blessed Saviour,—the conpendium and substance of all equity; “*Whatever ye*

“*would that men should do unto you, were they in your*” circumstances, and you in theirs, *do ye even so to them.*” We may add, that the virtue of justice is not only the main pillar and strength of societies, but, as it were, the essential and vital spirit by which they subsist; and that the contrary vices,—viz. *conferiousness, detraction, slander, undermining arts, rigorous oppression, and injuries of every kind,* are directly calculated to dissolve the frame of all governments, to render a regular social life absolutely impossible, and human existence itself insupportable, except from the hope of enjoying that eternal state, where the wicked shall for ever cease from troubling.

4. By the following article, *whatever things are pure,* is chiefly meant the virtues of continence and chastity; opposed to which stand the infamous sin of adultery, universally detested and branded; *fornication, sensuality,*—actions or discourses offensive to modesty, which are all known and fitly described by the name of impurities,—as spreading defilement and a deadly taint over the soul, and thus creating a strong aversion to intellectual and spiritual enjoyments, and to the divine pleasures arising from communion with God, and from a consciousness of moral rectitude through the grace and Spirit of Christ.

Finally, by the things which are of good report, if any particular virtues are designed, those must be understood which are universally celebrated as the marks of a truly noble and gracious disposition; and by the things which are amiable and lovely, those virtues which have a peculiar attractive beauty and gracefulness;—such as, a disinterested and unconfined benevolence, generosity, returning good for evil, moderation in affluence and power, humility and condescension in high stations;—in opposition to all selfishness, narrowness of heart, revenge,—dishonouring and corrupting the innocent, to satiate a brutal passion; haughtiness and influence, ingratitude and cruelty. So that from the view above taken, united with the power of Almighty grace, the course lies open and plain before us, in which we may adorn human nature, and advance it to the highest pitch of moral beauty; as well as the opposite path, which necessarily leads to deformity, and shame, and everlasting ruin.

Thus then we have seen, that in a single passage of the New Testament we have a complete system of morals, as it were in miniature; the grand character of genuine virtue is clearly asserted, wisely laid down, and exhibited in a proper variety of lights: the characteristics are so proposed, that they may be considered as general rules, at the same time that they direct our view to almost all the particular branches of morals: and to render the account as comprehensive as possible, a clause is added, in which, by a fair and easy interpretation, the peculiar duties of every rank and condition, and the noblest refinements and heights of grace, holiness, and virtue, may be supposed to be inculcated. In short, from the abridgement of its precepts here given by St. Paul, we may reasonably infer, “*the extent, the sublimity, the perfection of that moral*” goodness which the Gospel of Christ requires.”

What then remains, but that, *if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we should think on these things?* If holiness and virtue be realities, and not empty fictions; and if there be any just ground of praise, it must of necessity be in such things as these. And what crowns the whole, if, through the grace of God, we obtain acceptance

with him in and through the Beloved, and by the inspiration of his Spirit attain to these heavenly graces, "an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle,

1. With the most endearing appellations, exhorts his Philippians to stand fast in the truth. *Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, to whom my whole soul is drawn out in warmest affection, and whose salvation I so earnestly desire, longing to see you my joy in every remembrance of your fidelity, and my crown, whom now I esteem my chief honour, and who will I trust be my most distinguished glory in the day of Christ; so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved; cleaving to that divine Redeemer in whom you have believed; unshaken by danger, unterrified by opposition, and looking up for that Divine grace, which can make you more than conquerors.* Note; (1.) None can tell the fervent longings of a faithful minister's heart after the salvation of his people's souls, but those that feel them. (2.) They who have already approved themselves faithful, are especially bound to persevere in the same blessed course.

2. He entreats, that some individuals who were at variance, either with the church, or each other, might be happily reconciled. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord, and lay aside their disputes, united in love and peace. And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, who with me already hast heartily laboured in the cause of Christ, help these women, and endeavour to reconcile them to the church, and to each other, which have been so useful in former days, and laboured with me in the gospel, helping and assisting me; with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life, possessing a present interest in Christ: happy are they, whose names shall be found written there on the great day of account.*

3. He exhorts them to holy joy. *Rejoice in the Lord always; in all circumstances, and under every trial, maintain a holy delight in God, which will sweeten every affliction: and again I say, Rejoice in him as your Saviour, your refuge, help, and hope, in every time of need.*

4. *Let your moderation be known unto all men: shew a spirit of meekness and patience, which never is wearied out with provocations; and be weaned from every inordinate attachment to this present world. The Lord is at hand, and will soon confound your Jewish adversaries in the destruction of their city and temple; and shortly will put an end to all the trials of his faithful people in the great day of his appearing and glory.*

5. *Be careful for nothing; be without perplexity or tormenting solicitude about the concerns of this world, and the difficulties in your way: but in every thing, at all times, and in all circumstances, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; casting all your care upon him, praising him for all the past mercies that you have experienced, and trusting him for whatever may be yet to come. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus; in answer to your prayers, God will give you his blessed peace, preserving you sedate and calm amidst every storm, fortifying your minds against every foe, and keeping you in a happy serenity, neither discom-*

posed, nor fainting under any of your troubles. Note; (1.) Though prudent forecast is not forbidden, all anxious fears which imply distrust of God, and bring torment to the heart, are exceeding sinful. (2.) Prayer is an antidote to every ill; and while we have a throne of grace open, where we can pour all our complaints into the bosom of a compassionate God, however perplexed, we need never be in despair, but should quietly wait to see the salvation of God.

6. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, agreeable to the word of God, and the dictates of sincerity and truth; whatsoever things are honest, venerable and becoming in dress, language, and deportment; whatsoever things are just, and equitable in your dealings and transactions; whatsoever things are pure, in thought, word, or action; whatsoever things are lovely, and render you amiable in the sight of God and man; whatsoever things are of good report, among the truly religious; if there be any virtue, any thing truly noble, brave, and generous; and if there be any thing that deserves praise and commendation; think on these things, and seriously desire to be found in the exercise of them. These things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do; copy after my precepts and practice; and then the God of peace shall be with you, and bless you with his presence, and with more abundant measures of his grace and love.*

2dly, The Philippians had generously contributed to the Apostle's support, and he gratefully mentions it to their honour.

1. He expresses his joy in the present fresh proof that they had given of love to him, and regard for the cause of Christ. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, and you have added to your former instances of generosity; wherein ye were also careful, and would ere this have sent to my relief, but ye lacked opportunity.*—Though it was a debt that they justly owed him, he mentions it as a favour for which he esteemed himself much obliged.

2. He obviates an ill use which might be made of what he said. *Not that I speak in respect of want, as though I was distrustful of a provision, or uneasy at my worldly circumstances; for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, satisfied in all the will of God. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in the lowest circumstances composed, in the greatest affluence not elated. Every where, and in all things, I am instructed, by my divine Master, to accommodate my mind to my situation; both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need; to know the want of bread without repining, and to have abundance, without abusing it to excess. I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me, and enables me for all the services and sufferings to which in his providence he is pleased to call me: notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction, in the seasonable relief you kindly sent.* Note; (1.) Want is a great temptation to murmur, as abundance is to excess; but Divine grace will enable us to accommodate our hearts to every circumstance. (2.) Though our strength is very weakness, the omnipotence of Jesus is engaged for his believing people; and then nothing is impracticable.

3. He makes honourable mention of what they had formerly done. *Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, or was ready*

ready to depart, to other countries, *no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only; for even in Thessalonica, a city so much more wealthy than yours, where I was constrained to work hard for my bread, ye sent once and again unto my necessity, when my circumstances were very strait, and my wants pressing. Not that I mention these things because I desire a gift, and want to worm myself into your favour: no such mercenary views influence my conduct; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account in the great day of recompense, when these labours of love shall be remembered and rewarded.*

4. He acknowledges the receipt of what Epaphroditus brought, and how sufficient it was for his wants; assuring them, that God would accept it as a grateful sacrifice at their hands. *But I have all I want, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God; better than the fumes of incense, or the smook of burnt-offerings. But though I cannot repay you in kind, my God, who is all-sufficient, shall supply all your need, giving you the earthly good things that you want, and especially bestowing all spiritual blessings upon you, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, which inestimable treasures he hath laid up for all his faithful saints. Note;*

None were ever losers by what they lent to the Lord, and employed in the service of his blessed cause.

3dly, We have,

1. An ascription of praise to God. *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* He is our Father to love us, our God abundantly to provide for us. We have long experienced his love and grace; with confidence let us trust him and ascribe to him the praise that we owe for all his past kindness and precious promises. *Note;* If God be our Father, we can want no manner of thing that is good.

2. Salutations to the brethren. *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus;* let every member of the church be assured of my most cordial regard and kindest wishes. *The brethren which are with me greet you with best remembrances. All the saints salute you, and join in Christian respects towards you; chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household, domestics of his family, now converted to the faith, and one in affection with you. Note;* It is a comfort to a real Christian to consider, that multitudes whom he never saw or knew, bear him upon their hearts, and remember him in their prayers.

3. His closing benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all its incomprehensible extent, and inconceivable fulness, be with you all: may the whole church and every member share it in the richest abundance! Amen.*

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Epistle St. Paul wrote during his first imprisonment at Rome, the subject matter of which, and of the Epistle to the Ephesians, is nearly the same; and the same expressions occur in many places, in both of them, especially in those moral exhortations which make so considerable a part of them; for, these exhortations being no less needful to one church than to the other, and the Apostle having the same duties to enforce, it would have been useless to have considerably varied the expressions. The difference between these two pious Epistles is, that, in that to the Ephesians, St. Paul had chiefly the main subject in view; which was, to treat of the Church itself, and of God's favours bestowed upon his faithful saints: whereas in this to the Colossians, his particular aim is, to oppose those false teachers, who were for re-establishing the usages of the ceremonial law; and who, following the Platonic philosophy, held, that the angels, being of a spiritual nature, occupied, in some sort, a middle place between God, who is an infinite Spirit, and man, who is made of spirit and matter: and, refining thereupon in their reveries, they considered the angels as a kind of mediators between God and us, to connect us, in some degree, with him; a doctrine which St. Paul condemns, in the second chapter of this Epistle, as criminal rashness. This ought to have taught all Christian ministers, in all ages of the Church, not to be wise above that which is written, but to study attentively what is written, in order to keep close, as Isaiah directs, to the law and to the testimony. Is. viii. 20.

CHAP. I.

After salutation, he thanketh God for their faith, confirmeth the doctrine of Epaphras, prayeth further for their increase in grace, describeth the true Christ, encourageth them to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and vindicates his own ministry.

[Anno Domini 62.]

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

2^b To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3^a We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all

^a Acts, 22. 14, 18, 21. & 26. 16—18. Rom. 1. 7. Gal. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 1. ^b Rom. 1. 7. Eph. 1. 1. & 6. 21. 1 Cor. 1. 2. & 4. 17. Phil. 1. 1. Heb. 3. 1. John, 15. 1—5. 1f. 62. 12. & 60. 2. & 26. 2. ^c Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 2. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Tit. 1. 4. Philem. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. Jude, 2. ^d See Rom. 1. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5. Eph. 1. 15—17. Phil. 1. 3—5. 1 Thes. 1. 2, 3. 2 Thes. 1. 3, 4. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Philem. 4. 5. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Tim. 2. 1. Heb. 6. 10.

CHAP. I.

EFFECTUALLY to silence the false teachers, who endeavoured to seduce the Colossian brethren to Judaism, the Apostle began the doctrinal part of this Epistle with confuting their leading error; the error for the sake of which all the rest were introduced; namely, that the institutions of Moses, but especially the Levitical sacrifices, were still necessary, because there were no propitiatory sacrifices in the gospel. This false and most destructive doctrine the Apostle exploded, by shewing that they who are translated into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; consequently, that, in the gospel dispensation, God hath appointed a propitiatory sacrifice of real efficacy; namely, the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, to which believers can have sure recourse for pardon, and have no need of any other propitiatory sacrifice whatever, ver. 13. 14.—But, as the Colossians might have been told by the Judaizers, that the pardon of the sins of the whole world was an effect too great to be ascribed to the once shedding of Christ's blood, the Apostle observed, that the atonement made by that one sacrifice, was perfectly sufficient for the taking away the sins of all who believe, because the infinite dignity of Christ, enhanced infinitely the merit of his death.—Christ's dignity the Apostle described in a magnificence of language suggested by the grandeur of the subject. He is the image of the invisible God, and the Lord of the whole creation, ver. 15.—for he created all things in the heavens, and upon the earth, visible and invisible, ver. 16.—and by him all things are upheld, ver. 17.—The Apostle having thus described the original and infinite dignity of Christ, as God's beloved Son, for the purpose of displaying the merit of his death, proceeded to speak of the honour and power which he received, in the human nature, as the reward of his death; whereby he shewed, in a conspicuous light, the folly of those who endeavoured to persuade the Colossians to prefer the mediation of angels to the mediation of Christ. He is the head of the body, even of the church, and the beginning or author thereof. He is also the first-born, or Lord of the dead; having died to raise them again to life, ver. 18.—This greatness, both in the natural and moral world, he hath received from his Father, that he may unite angels and men in one great community under himself, as their head, in order that

they may be happy in their subjection to the Triune God, and in the society of one another, to all eternity. For, says the Apostle, it pleased the Father, that in him all the fulness of perfection and power should constantly abide, ver. 19.—and, through the exercise of his authority and power, by him to unite all things under him as head, having made peace between them by the blood of his cross, ver. 20.—Even the idolatrous Gentiles, notwithstanding their former wickedness, he has thus united, ver. 21.—in one body with the Jews, in his church, through the death of his Son, to render them holy and unblameable in Christ's sight, at the last day, ver. 22.—To be in that manner presented before Christ, the Apostle told the Colossians, would be their happy lot, if they continued firm in the faith of the gospel doctrine, which, because of its efficacy to sanctify sinners, was preached to every creature under heaven; of which gospel St. Paul was made a minister by Christ himself, ver. 23.

But lest his imprisonment, for having preached salvation to the believing Gentiles, equally with the Jews, through the death of Christ, although they did not obey the law of Moses, might have led the Colossians to suspect the truth of his doctrine, the Apostle told them, that he rejoiced in the afflictions which he was enduring for them; that is, for maintaining their title to salvation; and that these afflictions were expressly appointed to him by Christ, for the purpose of building his body, which is his church, ver. 24.—of which church, he told them, a second time, he was made a minister, or apostle, to build it by fully publishing God's determination to save the faithful Gentiles, ver. 25.—Then he informed them, that this determination was a mystery, or secret, which, during the Mosaic dispensation, was kept hid, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles; but was now discovered to such of the Jews as God thought fit to employ in publishing it to the world, ver. 26.—To these preachers, God was pleased to make known, by revelation, the greatness of the glory of this mystery concerning the Gentiles; that is, the glorious excellence of that part of his plan which relates to the believing Gentiles; namely, that Jesus Christ, to them also, is the author of the hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, as well as to the Jews, ver. 27.—Him, therefore, all the inspired Christian teachers preach as the only Saviour of the world, exhorting every man to receive him as Saviour, and teaching every man, with all wisdom, the

the saints,

5 For ^e the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the ^f word of the truth of the gospel;

6 ^g Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and ^h bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye

heard *of it*, and ⁱ knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of ^k Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared unto us your ^l love in the Spirit.

^e Ver. 23. Rom. 8. 24. Gal. 5. 5. Eph. 1. 18. & 4. 4. Tit. 2. 13. & 3. 7. Heb. 6. 18, 19. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 13. ^f Acts, 13. 26. 2 Cor. 6. 7. Rom. 10. 8. Tit. 1. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Eph. 1. 13. Mark, 16. 15. ^g 1 Cor. 11. 9, 10. Pl. 9. 3. Mat. 28. 19. & 24. 14. & 26. 13. Rom. 10. 18. & 15. 19. Ver. 23. Acts, i—xx. Mark, 16. 15. ^h Mark, 4. 8. John, 15. 16. Eph. 5. 9. Phil. 1. 11. Acts, 6. 7. & 12. 24. & 19. 20. Tit. 2. 11—14. ⁱ Pl. 110. 3. Ezek. 16. 8. & 36. 26, 27. Acts, 16. 14. & 13. 48. & 11. 18. & 26. 18. Phil. 1. 29. 1 Thes. 1. 5. & 2. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3, 23. & 2. 1—3. ^k Ch. 4. 12. Philem. 23. Eph. 4. 11, 12. Heb. 13. 17. 2 Cor. 11. 23. 1 Tim. 4. 6. 2 Tim. 2. 2, 3, 15. ^l Ver. 4. Rom. 15. 30. & 5. 5. 2 Tim. 1. 7.

the true doctrines of religion; that, at the day of judgment, they may present every faithful Christian perfect, both in respect of pardon and holiness, ver. 28.—And to accomplish that glorious end, St. Paul himself laboured with the utmost vigour in preaching Jesus Christ the hope of glory, to believers of all nations, and in defending that doctrine with success, in proportion to the supernatural gifts bestowed upon him as an apostle, ver. 29.

COLOSSIANS.] *Colosse* was a considerable city of *Phrygia*, in Asia Minor, situated at a small distance from *Laodicea*; both which cities were destroyed by an earthquake, not long after the writing of this Epistle. St. Paul himself had not been at *Colosse* when he wrote it, though he had, some years before, travelled through *Phrygia*; however, *Epaphras* had founded a Christian church at *Colosse*, and probably in the neighbouring cities of *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*. It is probable that some *Colossians*, who had heard St. Paul preach at *Ephesus*, might be converted by him; and among them *Philemon*, to whom St. Paul addressed his Epistle, so entitled. The churches of *Colosse*, *Laodicea*, and *Hierapolis*, were exposed to more imminent danger of being seduced by false teachers than many others, as they had not received the gospel immediately from an apostle, but from *Epaphras*; and as they might question whether *Epaphras* did not err in some respects. This occasioned St. Paul's anxiety for them, and induced him to confirm the doctrine of *Epaphras* by this Epistle, which was written from *Rome*, about the same time with the preceding, in the year 62 or 63. *Lardner* thinks, that this and the Epistle to *Philemon* were sent away together by *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*; although that to *Philemon* was probably delivered first. The more immediate occasion of writing to the *Colossians* was, an Epistle which St. Paul had received from the *Laodiceans*, (see ch. iv. 16.) which *Michaelis* thinks contained some written queries relating to the doctrines of the *Essenes*, and that this Epistle was intended to answer them. The Epistle to the *Colossians* is so like that to the *Ephesians*, both in language and contents, that the one will greatly illustrate the other. See the introduction of the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, and also *Lardner*, *Doddridge*, *Michaelis*, *Locke*, and *Peirce*, to whom I am under considerable obligations in respect to my criticisms on this Epistle.

Ver. 1. *Timotheus our brother,*] Or, *Timothy the brother.*

Ver. 2. *To the saints and faithful brethren]* To the holy and faithful brethren. They might receive this appellation

of *holy*, not only on account of their strong attachment to the purity of the Christian faith, but likewise as a society by profession separated from the rest of the world.

Ver. 3. *To God and the Father]* To the God and Father. *Peirce*, *Doddridge*, &c. *P. Franck* has a good observation here, which illustrates the beauty of many scriptures: "The order which would seem most artificial is transposed, to make the sense plainer. It is not,—having heard of your faith, I bless God,—but vice versa." From this verse to the 13th, St. Paul acquaints them with the satisfactory account that he had received of their faith and love; assuring them, at the same time, of the great interest which they had in both his petitions and thanksgivings. In giving an account hereof, he evidently endeavours to raise their sense of the greatness of those peculiar advantages which they partook of by the gospel, which were such as the law could not secure to them; and which were in a more large and plentiful manner now dispersed, being offered to the whole world, and not confined, like the peculiar privileges of the former economy, to the comparatively small nation of the Jews. Hereby he likewise stirs up their gratitude to God, who had dealt so kindly with them; and excites their endeavours to answer the obligations under which he had laid them.

Ver. 4. *Since we heard of your faith, &c.]* See on *Ephes. i. 15.* and *Philip. i. 3—5.*

Ver. 5. *For the hope which is laid up, &c.]* There is an ambiguity in the connection of this clause. It may either signify that the Apostle gives thanks for this their hope, (supposing the 4th verse to come in as a parenthesis,) or it may more directly refer to the immediately preceding words, and intimate, that a partnership in this blessed hope cemented the hearts of these good men. In either sense the connection is instructive; but the former appears most natural.

Ver. 6. *In all the world;]* "In all the provinces of the Roman empire," as the phrase often signifies. See *Rom. x. 18.* The words in *truth*, at the end of the verse, may be referred to their knowledge; and then it should be rendered, *since you truly knew the grace of God.* But St. Paul seems rather here to mean, *the true grace of God*, as the gospel is called, *1 Pet. v. 12.* By the true grace, or unmixed gospel of God, he probably intends what was strongly on his mind,—God's great favour to the Gentiles, in receiving them to be his people, without their submitting to circumcision, and the Jewish law.

Ver. 8. *Your love in the Spirit.*—The Apostle's meaning seems

9 ^m For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 That ye ⁿ might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 ^o Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, ^p unto all patience and

long-suffering with joyfulnefs;

12 ^q Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 ^r Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of ^s * his dear Son:

14 ^t In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

15 ^v Who is the image of the invisible God, ^w the first-born of every creature:

^m Eph. 1. 15—19. & 3. 15—19. Phil. 1. 9—11. Rom. 12. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 5. Eph. 5. 10 17. ⁿ Eph. 4. 1. Phil. 1. 11, 27. 1 Thes. 2. 17. & 4. 1. Ch. 4. 12. Gen. 17. 1. John. 15. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Pet. 1. 3—9. & 3. 18. 1 Cor. 10. 31, 42. ^o Eph. 3. 16. & 6. 10. & 1. 19. If. 40. 29—31. Zech. 10. 12. Phil. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 12. 9. ^p Rom. 5. 3—5. 2 Cor. 6. 4, 6. Gal. 5. 22. Eph. 4. 2. Heb. 12. 1, 2. Acts. 5. 41. Heb. 10. 14. Phil. 2. 17, 18. & 3. 1, 3. & 4. 4. Jam. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. Mat. 5. 12. 2 Cor. 1. 5. ^q See Eph. 5. 4. 20. Pf. 115. 1. & cvii. xxxvi. Ch. 3. 15. ^r 1 Kings, 6. 7. 2 Cor. 5. 5. Eph. 1. 3—11. 1 Pet. 1. 4. 1 John, 1. 1. Jude, 1. 1 Thes. 5. 23. ^s Luke, 12. 32. Jer. 3. 19. Acts, 26. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 4. Rom. 8. 17. Mat. 25. 34. ^t If. 49. 25. Acts, 26. 18. Heb. 2. 14, 15. Eph. 6. 12. & 4. 18. & 5. 8. 1 Thes. 2. 19. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Tit. 2. 14. Eph. 2. 4—10. Pf. 2. 8. If. 58. 10—12. ^u If. 42. 1. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 17. Eph. 1. 6. ^v Gr. the son of his love. ^w Eph. 1. 7. Rom. 3. 24—26. & 24. 25. Acts, 13. 38, 39. & 20. 28. Mat. 20. 28. Heb. 9. 12, 14, 15. 1 Pet. 1. 19. & 3. 18. Rev. 5. 9. ^x John, 14. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Phil. 2. 6. Heb. 1. 3. ^y Pf. 89. 27. & 110. 1, 5. Heb. 1. 2. Rev. 3. 14.

seems to be, that their love to him was purely upon a spiritual account;—for the sake of the doctrine that he taught; they not having reason to love him upon any inferior consideration, since they had never seen him. See ch. ii. 1, 5.

Ver. 9. *Since the day we heard it,*] Our translators, by inserting *it*, shew that they thought this verse stood connected with ver. 7, 8. whereas those two verses are rather a parenthesis; and the present verse is to be joined with ver. 6. This seems clear from what he says,—*That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will.* The *auris*, *his*, relates here to God, mentioned in the end of the 6th verse, and consequently the sense is better supplied by *these things*;—that is, all the good things which he had before mentioned concerning them. By comparing the latter part of this verse with Ephes. i. 8, 9. it appears, that in both places is meant a comprehensive view of the will of God; or, as he there calls it, *the mystery of his will*; namely, his great purpose of calling the Gentiles. The *spiritual understanding* is an understanding of spiritual things, or such things as were revealed by the Spirit, of which the aforesaid mystery was one. St. Paul shews himself very desirous that the Colossians should thoroughly understand and acknowledge this mystery. See ch. ii. 1, 2.

Ver. 10. *That ye might walk worthy.* &c.] The Apostle seems here most pathetically to propose the great subject and design of this Epistle; which was chiefly intended to excite them to a temper and behaviour worthy their Christian character, and which, indeed, is the leading view in all his writings. Some would render the latter part of this verse, *Being fruitful and increasing in every good work, for the knowledge of God*; that is, for the acquiring of that knowledge for which St. Paul had thanked God before, ver. 6.—that the gospel brought forth fruit among the Colossians; and it seems natural to suppose, that when he prays here, that *they might bring forth fruit in every good work*, he does not pray barely for what they already did, but for a further increase of it. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 1, 10. The words thus understood inform us, that a holy conversation is very

serviceable to dispose men to acquire the knowledge of God.

Ver. 12. *Made us meet to be partakers,*] The words rendered, *partakers of the inheritance*, literally signify, the *proportion of an inheritance*, which falls by lot to each of those among whom it is divided; alluding, as is supposed, to the manner in which the land of Canaan was divided among the tribes. It may be rendered, *who hath made us fit for a part in the inheritance of the saints in light*;—an expression which some understand as referring to the lustre of the glorified body of the saints; who will be clothed after the resurrection with a visible lucid glory, resembling that of the *Shechinah*.

Ver. 13. *Who hath delivered us.*] Some think that the *us* and *we*, in these verses, refer to the Gentile converts only; but though there is no doubt that the Apostle refers to their dark and sinful state, yet there is no reason to believe that he means to exclude himself: for when divine grace made him sensible of what he had been in his pharisaical state, while a *blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious*, he must certainly have seen himself to have been under the power of darkness; as Christ represents those of the Jews to have been, who, influenced by the spirits of darkness, were combined against him. See Luke, xxii. 53.

Ver. 14.] St. Paul having, in the 13th verse, mentioned *God's dear Son*, he here, according to his usual manner, runs out immediately into a digression concerning him; but it is such a digression as is very much to his main purpose; viz. to establish them in their adherence to Christ, and to make them sensible how unreasonable their attempt was, who endeavoured to seduce them from him. Nothing could be said more proper for this end, than what he here says, to shew the pre-eminence and headship of Christ, in all respects, even infinitely above the angels, whom some would have persuaded them to worship; and to set forth his transcendent excellency, and the greatness of the advantages which the Gentiles received by him. See the *Inferences and Reflections*.

Ver. 15. *Who is the image*] Adam is said to have been

16 For ^a by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or do-

minions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 ^b And he is before all things, and by

^a John, 1. 2, 3. Heb. 1. 2. & 3. 3-6. Eph. 3. 9. Rom. 11. 36. & 8. 32. 1 Cor. 8. 6. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Eph. 1. 21. & 6. 12. Ch. 2. 15. with Heb. 2. 10. ^b Prov. 8. 3-31. John, 1. 1-3. & 17. 5. Heb. 13. 8. & 1. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 6.

made in the image of God, and dominion given him over the creatures of the earth; by which he became Lord of this lower world. St. Paul, in Philip. ii. 6. tells us, that *Christ was in the form of God*, which gave him dominion over the works of nature, which had their being from, and owe their preservation to his power. Moses gives us an account how Adam fell from the dignity in which he was created, and entailed misery upon his descendants, through his disobedience and vain ambition. St. Paul says, that Christ, through obedience and submission to the will of his Father, has made an atonement, and has set us an example, by which, if *the same mind be in us*, through his grace, we may recover what is lost. Moses tells us, that Adam was tempted to eat the forbidden fruit, upon the hopes which the tempter gave him, that it would make him *like to God*. He thought it such an advantageous proposal, that he caught at the opportunity, and eagerly embraced the offer. St. Paul's account is, that Christ, who had a right by nature to appear in the majesty and glory of God, yet voluntarily laid it aside, and lived and died upon earth, in fashion as a man. What *Adam* got by his bold attempt, we all know; but *Christ*, for a recompence of his obedience, was highly exalted in his glorified humanity. *Adam* was, at best, a faint image of God; but *Christ* was a true, faithful, and infinitely complete *image* of the wisdom, power, and goodness of his Father. *Adam* was such an image of God, as the reflection of the sun is, when seen in the water; but *Christ* was such an image of the sun, as another sun would be, adorned with equal lustre and radiance. The Apostle describes our Redeemer in this and the following verses, in such lofty terms, as evidently bespeak him to be a Divine Person, truly and really God; and consequently the fittest, the only person to undertake so great and glorious a work as the redemption of a perishing world. The Father is always represented in the New Testament as *invisible*: but *Christ* is represented as *visible*; since he actually took upon him flesh, and was seen in the world. Indeed, his being called *the image of God*, in this place, and 2 Cor. iv. 4. implies his being visible, and that the perfections of the whole Godhead do most eminently shine in him. It is remarkable how expressly Philo, the Jew, in more places than one, calls the *Logos*, or *Word*, of which he speaks, *the image of God*.

Dr. Hammond observes, that the word *πρωτότοκος*, besides the ordinary notion of *first-born*, is used sometimes in scripture for a *Lord*, or person in power; who hath the privilege of the first-born, dominion over all his brethren; and according to this notion it is used commonly in scripture for a prince, or principal person; (see Pf. lxxviii. 27.) and among the civilians, *the heir* and *the lord* are synonymous terms. That this is the true sense of the word in this place, appears probable, for the following reasons: 1. Because the Apostle immediately adds, *for by him were*

all things created; so that the creation of all things by him is given as a reason for his being *πρωτότοκος*, or *the first-born*. Now it is not a good argument, that, because he created all things, he was therefore himself produced before them; it is sufficient for that purpose, that he had almighty power, and was before them: but it is a very good argument, that, because he *created all things*, he should therefore be *Lord*, or *Heir of all things*. 2dly, Because the same Apostle, Heb. i. 2. hath stiled the same person *Heir of all things*; and probably alluded to the same reason, when he added, *by whom also he made the worlds*. Thirdly, Because the prophecy in Pf. lxxxix. 26, 27. confirms this interpretation, and shews the true meaning of the word. *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation; also I will make him my first-born*,—(in the *lxx.* *πρωτότοκος*;) *higher than the kings of the earth*; but, according to the Arian notion, this should have been, *He is or was my first-born*. See Heb. i. 6. Rev. iii. 14. It may not be amiss to observe, that the word *πρωτότοκος* hath yet another signification, and is applied by Homer, Il. P. to an animal that hath brought forth its first young; in which sense it might be applied, without any great impropriety, to the Creator of all things; to Him, who, as it were at the first birth, by the exertion of his creating power, brought forth all things. The words *πᾶσις κτίσις*, so naturally signifying *the whole creation*, [as they are translated in Rom. viii. 22.] (a version which gives a much nobler and more determinate sense than *every creature*), at least render this interpretation very remarkable. Some translate it *the first-born before*, or *born before all the creation*. See Blackwall, S. C. vol. ii, p. 173. Sherlock, vol. iv. dis. 1. Scott's Christian Life, vol. iii. p. 559. Wallis's Sermon on the Resurrection, Tillotson, vol. i. serm. 43. and "The Doctrine of the Trinity," &c. p. 16.

According to the Arians, *the first-born of the whole creation*, is *the first-made creature*. But the reason advanced to prove the Son *the first-born of the whole creation*, overturns that sense of this passage. For surely the Son's creating all things, does not prove him to be the first-made creature, unless his power of creating all things originated from his being the first-made creature; which no one I think will affirm. As little does the Son's creating all things, prove that he first of all created himself. Yet these absurdities will be established by the Apostle's reasoning, if *the first-born of the whole creation* signifies *the first-made creature*.

Ver. 16. *Whether they be thrones, &c.*] See Ephes. iii. 10. *For him*, at the end of the verse, means *to be in subjection to him*,—to be created particularly for his glory. This is justified by what is said, ver. 18. *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*.

Ver. 17. *And by him all things consist*] This is a new argument which St. Paul uses, to prove the supereminent dignity

by him all things consist.

18. And he is ^c the head of the body, the church: who is ^d the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that * in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

19 For it pleased *the Father* that in him ^e should all fulness dwell;

20 And, † ^f having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And ^g you, that were some time alienated, and enemies ‡ in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,

22 ^h In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in his sight:

23 If ye ⁱ continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from ^j the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which ^k was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul ^l am made a minister:

24 Who now ^m rejoice in my sufferings for you, ⁿ and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his ^o body's sake, which is the church;

25 ^p Whereof I am made a minister accor-

^a 1 Cor. 11. 3. & 12. 12, 27. Eph. 1. 10, 22, 23. & 4. 12, 15, 16. & 5. 23, 30. Ch. 2. 10. Ver. 24. ^q Ver. 15. John, 11. 25. Acts, 26. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 20—23. Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. If. 26. 19. John, 14. 19. & 4. 10. Ch. 3. 11. with 2. 3, 9. Mt. 11. 27. & 28. 18. Eph. 1. 3. ^r Or among all. ^s John, 1. 14, 16. & 4. 34, 35. Eph. 1. 23. & 4. 10. Ch. 3. 11. with 2. 3, 9. Mt. 11. 27. & 28. 18. Eph. 1. 3. ^t Or making peace. ^u Acts, 10. 36. Rom. 3. 24—26. & 5. 10. Eph. 2. 14—16. & 1. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 18—21. 1 John, 4. 9, 10. Luke, 2. 14. & 19. 38. ^v 1 Cor. 6. 9—11. Tit. 2. 3—7. Eph. 2. 2. 5. & 4. 17—19, 32. & 5. 8. Rom. 5. 1, 6—11. & 8. 2—8. & 3. 10—22. & 1. 30. & 8. 2, 33, 34. ^w Or by your mind in wicked works. ^x Eph. 2. 15. & 1. 4—7. & 5. 25—27. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. 2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Thes. 4. 7. Luke, 1. 75. Jude, 24. ^y Phil. 1. 27. & 4. 1. Heb. 3. 6, 14. & 4. 14. & 10. 23, 39. Eph. 3. 17, 18. Ch. 2. 7. John, 15. 4—7. Gal. 6. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 58. ^z Ver. 5. Rom. 5. 5. & 15. 4, 13. Eph. 1. 18. 2 Thes. 2. 16. Heb. 6. 11, 18, 19. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Tit. 1. 2. & 2. 13. Gal. 5. 5. ^{aa} Mark, 16. 15. Mat. 28. 19. Rom. 10. 18. See ver. 16. ^{ab} 2 Cor. 3. 6. & 4. 1. & 5. 18—20. & 6. 1. Eph. 3. 7, 8. 1 Tim. 1. 11, 12. & 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 11. Ver. 1. 25. ^{ac} Rom. 5. 9. 2 Cor. 7. 4. Phil. 2. 17. Eph. 3. 13. Jam. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 14. Gal. 6. 14. ^{ad} 2 Cor. 1. 5—8. & 4. 8—12. & 11. 23—27. 1 Cor. 4. 9—13. 2 Tim. 1. 8. & 2. 10. & 3. 11. ^{ae} See ver. 18. ^{af} See ver. 23. Acts, 9. 15. & 26. 16—18. Eph. 3. 2, 7, 8. 2 Cor. 3. 6. Rom. 11. 13.

dignity and authority of Christ; namely, that as the Father made all things by him, so he upholds and preserves all things by him too. The same is asserted, Heb. i. 3. where he is said to uphold all things by the word of his power.

Ver. 18. *And he is the head of the body*] St. Paul had proved Christ's superiority to all the creatures, by his making and sustaining them; and now, by a third argument, he confirms his full authority over the church, and that is by God the Father's constitution and appointment at his resurrection. The insisting expressly upon this was agreeable to his grand design, to confirm the Colossians in their regard to Christ, being apprehensive that they were in some danger of being drawn off from him. The beginning here mentioned, (*who is the beginning*) is very different from that spoken of before; and yet this beginning, which is his resurrection, is plainly laid down as a foundation of the principality and headship which he holds over the church. He was the beginning, with respect to the creation of all things, being the Lord or first-born of every creature; He is the beginning and head of the church, being the first-born from the dead;—the first who ever rose to an endless life. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Acts xxvi. 23. Rev. i. 5. In all things, means in all respects; not only as the Maker of all things, but as the Mediator raised from the dead.

Ver. 19. *For it pleased, &c.*] Or, *For in him all fulness pleased to dwell.* The 9th verse of the next chapter seems clearly to explain this passage—"It pleased the Father that all the plenitude of the Godhead should reside in him bodily." The word rendered dwell signifies a permanent and inseparable presence; and it is stiled by the fathers an hypostatical union. See John i. 16. Ephes. i. 23.

Ver. 20. *And (having made peace, &c.) And by him to reconcile all things unto the same (having made peace by the blood*

of his cross) by him, I say, &c. Dr. Whitby would render it, *by him to make all things friendly in him, making peace between them by the blood of his cross.* But if we take the words in their literal sense, they mean that by him God hath reconciled all things to each other, whether things on earth, i. e. Jews and Gentiles, or things in heaven, i. e. celestial spirits, who are now reconciled to all the glorified saints and to all that believe upon earth, and incorporated with them into one holy and happy society: for when a breach commenced between God and man, the angels, as faithful subjects, must join with God against rebellious man, and be ready to act as enemies to him, as long as he continued an enemy to God. See Eph. i. 10.

Ver. 22. *In the body of his flesh, &c.*] That body, or mortal flesh, which he was pleased to assume, that he might be capable of suffering. See Ephes. ii. 16. v. 27—30. and ver. 10. of the present chapter.

Ver. 23. *If ye continue in the faith, &c.*] "You will certainly be so presented, if ye continue established and grounded in the faith in which you have been instructed, and be not by any floods of affliction or tempests of temptation, removed and carried away from the important hope of a happy immortality brought to us by the glorious gospel; which we have heard, and which hath not only been published among the Jews, but, by a special commission from God, been preached to the whole creation under heaven, as a message which extends to all the species of mankind; by which he commandeth all men every where to repent, and promises salvation to all who believe and obey. Of which gospel I Paul am appointed a minister, and esteem it my peculiar honour and happiness that I am so."

Ver. 24. *And fill up, &c.*] Nothing could be further from the Apostle's intention (as is manifest from the whole

ding to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, ' to fulfil the word of God ;

26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints :

27 To whom God would ' make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is ^u Christ * in

you, the hope of glory :

28 ^z Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that ' we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus :

29 Whereunto I also ^z labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

¹ Or fully to preach the word of God. Rom. 15. 19. 1 Cor. 4. 1. & 9. 17. 2 Tim. 4. 2, 5. Rom. 16. 25, 26. Eph. 3. 9. & 1. 9. Mat. 11. 11. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. Tit. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 20. 2 Cor. 2. 14. Gal. 1. 16. Eph. 1. 12-20, 7 & 2. 7. & 3. 8, 10. Rom. 9. 23. Prov. 8. 18, 19. Ch. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 2. 3. Ch. 3. 11. Luke, 17. 21. 2 Cor. 13. 5. Gal. 4. 19. & 2. 10. Eph. 3. 17. Rom. 6. 4. & 8. 26. Col. 3. 1, 4. Eph. 2. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 1. * Or among. 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24 & 2. 2. Acts, 20. 20, 27. 2 Tim. 4. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Eph. 4. 13. & 5. 27. Ver. 22. Col. 4. 12. Heb. 5. 14. Dan. 12. 3. Jam. 5. 20. Heb. 13. 21. Jude, 24. 1 Cor. 15. 10. Phil. 1. 30. & 2. 16. Ch. 2. 6. Gal. 4. 19. Rom. 15. 19.

tenor of his writings), than to intimate that the sufferings of Christ were imperfect as to that fulness of atonement which was necessary in order to the justification of believers. But he deeply retained in his mind the impression of that first lesson which he had from his Saviour's mouth, namely, that *he was persecuted in his members*. Acts ix. 4. He therefore considers it as the plan of Providence, that a certain measure of sufferings should be endured by this body of which Christ was the head ; and he rejoices to think, that what he endured in his own person, did in some sense and degree resemble the sufferings of his adorable Lord. Comp. Ephes. iii. 13. Philip. ii. 17, 18.

Ver. 26. *Even the mystery, &c.*] See Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 9, &c.

Ver. 27. *Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,*] " This rich display of divine grace is all summed up in one word, *That Christ is in you the hope of eternal glory*. Being formed by divine grace in your hearts, he brings to you, who were once *without hope, and without God in the world*, (Eph. ii. 12.) the bright beamings of this blessed prospect ;—even of a glorious and holy immortality."

Ver. 28. *Whom we preach*] All this discourse centers in the great view of engaging the Colossians to adhere to genuine Christianity ; and it is pleasing to observe how every verse, and almost every clause, suggests more directly or obliquely some strong argument to that purpose. The words *every man* occurring no less than three times in the compass of this one verse, shews that St. Paul laid great stress upon them. The meaning of the last clause is, " I labour that my ministry may have that effect upon all my hearers, whether Jews or Gentiles, as that every one of them may appear perfect in the sight of God." Nor need it seem strange that the Apostle should speak of this presenting, as his own act, since he uses a somewhat similar expression elsewhere, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ* : the expression here seems used in allusion to the offerings presented to God under the law. When he says *perfect in Christ Jesus*, he hints, that they had not, and could not have, this perfection by the Mosaic law.

Ver. 29. *Striving according to his working, &c.*] This may import the many signs and wonders which God enabled him to perform for the confirmation of the doctrine that he preached ; (comp. Gal. ii. 8. 2 Cor. xiii. 3.) or else the di-

vine influence upon himself, whereby he was excited and enabled with such vast diligence, industry, and success, to preach the gospel. Comp. Rom. xv. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 10. The next verse, which, with the two following, should not have been separated from this chapter, leads us rather to prefer the latter of these senses.

Inferences.—What a divine authority does the apostolic character give to St. Paul's epistles ! And with what affection should we, after his example, with all aboundings of grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, to all the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus ! And how should we bless God on their behalf, and recommend them in our prayers to him, on account of what we see or hear of their faith and love ! What a mercy is it that this gospel is now preached, by divine commission, to Gentiles as well as Jews, in all its unsearchably glorious riches ; which was a mystery concealed in a great measure from former ages, but is now manifested to the saints ! But how much greater is the mercy still, to know this gospel of the grace of God in truth ; to experience its efficacy in delivering us from the power of Satan, and translating us into the kingdom of God's best beloved Son ; and to have Christ dwelling in our hearts as our hope of glory ! This encourages further prayers for all increase in light and grace and strengthenings, by the glorious operations of divine power, unto all patience, long-suffering and joy, under all the trials of life ; and unto all becoming, fruitful, and holy walking with God, who in this way makes all his faithful people meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

How great and glorious is the person of Christ ! He is the essential and representative image of God the Father, who in his own nature is invisible ; he had an eternal existence before all worlds, and is the Creator and Upholder, the first cause and last end of all things, from the highest to the lowest of them, in heaven and on earth : He also, as Mediator, is the Head of his mystical body the church ; has all office and dispensatory fulness constantly residing in him ; and is the first and chief that rose from the dead to immortal life, and every way supereminent to all saints and angels. And how important are the benefits which the faithful receive from him ! They who were some time enemies, through the iniquity of their hearts and lives, are now reconciled to God by his atoning death, have remission of

CHAP. II.

He still exhorteth them to be constant in Christ, to beware of philosophy, and vain traditions, worshipping of angels, and legal ceremonies, which are ended in Christ.

[Anno Domini 62.]

FOR I would that ye knew what ^a a great ^{*} conflict I have for you, and *for* them at

^a 1 Thes. 2. 2. ^b Cor. 12. 28. Phil. 1. 30. Ch. 4. 12. & 1. 24, 29. Gal. 4. 19. ^{*} Or fear, or care. ^b 2 Cor. 1. 6. Rom. 5. 5.
^a 1 Thes. 3. 5. ^c 1 Thes. 4. 9. Ch. 3. 14. ^c Phil. 3. 8—10. ^d 2 Pet. 3. 18. & 1. 3. ^e If. 53. 11. John, 17. 3. Ch. 1. 9. Jer. 9. 23. ^f 1 John, 5. 7. Mat. 28. 19. Exod. 34. 6, 7. John, 3. 16. If. 7. 14. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

sins through his redeeming blood, and are sanctified by his Spirit. And what an honour is it to be made wise and faithful preachers of Christ, and instruments of presenting multitudes perfect in him! Who would not willingly lay themselves out to the utmost, according to the powerful workings of his grace in and with them, to subserve this blessed design; and rather rejoice than repine at any sufferings, to what degree soever they may be called to undergo them in the cause of Christ, for his sake, and for the conversion, edification, and eternal salvation of immortal souls!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle opens his epistle with his usual introduction. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, appointed to that eminent honour and office by an immediate commission from heaven, and Timothy our brother, who joins with me in this epistle, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse, who are living members of Christ's mystical body, and in practice correspond with their holy profession; Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; may every blessing of pardon, adoption, comfort, strength, sanctification, and glory, be your happy portion!*

2dly, Though unknown to them in person, yet in heart and affection warmly attached to them, the blessed Paul,

1. Thanks God for the pleasing account which he had heard of them. *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our reconciled and covenant God in him; praying always for you, that you may abide and abound in every thing that is excellent; and blessing God for what he has already done on your behalf; since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and how cordially you embraced his glorious gospel, and rested firm on him alone for acceptance and salvation: and of the love which ye have to all the saints, the genuine fruit of your faith, and the proof of your unfeigned love to him whose image they bear; for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, even the eternal blessedness which God hath prepared and promised for all his faithful saints; whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel which is come unto you; through the Divine Providence it has been preached among you, as it is in all the world, throughout the Roman empire, and bringeth forth fruit, made effectual by the Divine Power to the conversion of men's souls; as it doth also in you produce the most blessed effects, since the day ye heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth, experimentally made acquainted therewith, receiving the gospel both in the light and in the love of it.*

Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh:

2 ^b That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto ^c all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the ^d mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; for to his labours you are singularly indebted; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit, testifying his warm affection toward you, in the report that he made of your unfeigned love to Christ and his people, the evidence of the genuine work of God's Spirit in your souls. Note, (1.) The mercies of which others, who are near and dear to us, partake, call for our thankfulness, as well as those which we receive from God ourselves. (2.) It is an inestimable favour, through Divine Providence, to hear the word of the truth of the gospel preached; but the grand matter is to receive it into our hearts, and to know the grace of God in truth. (3.) Wherever Divine Grace operates effectually, it will be seen in the blessed fruits which are produced thereby. (4.) A faithful minister is an invaluable blessing to any people; and highly are they bound to love and honour him.

2. To his thanksgivings he adds his hearty prayers. *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you. [1.] That ye may be made wise unto salvation: and to desire, proceeds the Apostle, that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, your minds more clearly discerning the riches of the grace of God, your privileges, and the practice of holiness which thence results, advancing in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: and [2.] Disposed to follow in simplicity the light which God beflows, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, adorning your holy profession by a suitable conversation, and desiring to approve yourselves to the great Master: being fruitful, as trees of righteousness, in every good work, that is for the glory of God, and the benefit of your brethren; and thus increasing in the knowledge of God. Note, As knowledge is essential to all acceptable service, so the more faithfully we improve the grace given us, the more fully shall we be let into the secrets of wisdom. For if any man doth his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, John, vii. 17. [3.] We pray that ye may be strengthened with all might in the inner man, for the discharge of every duty, and to resist every enemy of your souls, according to his glorious power, which can support you abundantly unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, bearing up your minds with cheerfulness under all persecutions or afflictions which may befall you, neither weary nor desponding, but with holy triumph exulting in the grace that you have experienced, and the promises of continual help in every time of need. Note, (1.) All our strength must come from above, and is to be obtained in the way of prayer. (2.) Every true believer, consisting with and conquering sin and Satan,*

3 † In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should be-
guile you with enticing words.

* Mat. 11. 25, 27. 1 Cor. 1. 24. & 2. 6. Eph. 1. 8. & 3. 10. Ch. 1. 9, 19. & 3. 16. † Or *wherein*. † Gen. 27. 25. Rom. 16. 18.
2 Cor. 11. 3, 13. Eph. 4. 14. & 5. 6. Mat. 24. 4, 24. 2 Tim. 2. 18. & 3. 6. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 3, 18, 19. Ver. 18. Tit. 1. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 20.

Satan, is a living monument of God's glorious power, and like the burning bush, though compassed with temptations, is not consumed. (3.) However multiplied, prolonged, or afflictive our trials may be, we are called to exercise all *patience*, and neither to murmur nor faint under them: and, hard as the work is, God will enable the believer for that which he does command, yea, not only to be resigned, but to rejoice in the midst of tribulations.

3dly, The Apostle returns again to thanksgiving,

1. In view of the inestimable blessings to which they had been admitted. *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, by his Spirit renewing our hearts, raising up our affections to high and heavenly things, and preparing us, if faithful, for that glory which he hath prepared for us. *Note*, It would be folly and delusion to expect our lot among the saints in light, if we have not our conversation among them here below.

2. He gives thanks to God, *who hath delivered us from the power of darkness*, plucking us as brands from the burning, rescuing us from the slavery of sin and Satan, and *hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*, admitting us to the inestimable privileges and blessings of that kingdom of light and grace which Jesus came to erect, that we might be brought under his happy government. *Note*, (1.) We are by nature slaves of sin and Satan, walking in darkness, and liable each moment to rush into eternal ruin. (2.) It is an act of amazing grace, when God is pleased to pluck the sinner from this miserable state; but this he is willing to do for every real penitent.

3. He blesses God for the salvation obtained through Christ, *in whom we have redemption through his blood*, deliverance from guilt, and, as the earnest of our adoption, *the forgiveness of sins*, freely bestowed upon us.

4. He describes the glorious personage, to whom we are indebted for pardon, grace, and every blessing; *who is the image of the invisible God*; one with the Father in essence and perfections, and, as incarnate, appears his visible representative, *the first-born, or first-begotten of every creature*, begotten before the worlds were, and the Lord and Heir of all creation. *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, from the lowest rank of beings to the highest archangel, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, by whatever names or titles distinguished, whether in heaven, or in earth: all things were created by him; and for him, by his power and for his glory. And he is before all things, in eternal pre-existence; and by him all things consist*, preserved and upheld by his providence and care, as they were spoken into being at his word. *And he is the head of the body*, in his peculiar character as Mediator, not only as having the dominion over all things, but also as communicating vital influence to the several members, of which the church universal is composed: *who is the beginning, the principle of spiritual life to his believing people; the first-born from*

the dead, who rose by his own power, and is the pledge, and first-fruits of our resurrection; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, exalted far above all creatures, the object of adoration to saints and angels, and possessing the first place in their affection and regard. For it pleased the Father, in consequence of the complete atonement which he has made, that in him should all fulness dwell for the use of his church, all fulness of merit, righteousness, graces, gifts, according to their wants, to be freely dispensed to every real member of his body mystical. And (having made peace through the blood of his cross, receiving full satisfaction to his justice, by the oblation of the body of Jesus once for all, and now, consistently with his own glory, being able to extend mercy to the guilty sinner) it pleased the Father by him to reconcile all things unto himself, restoring them from their state of enmity to his forfeited regard, in a way as honourable to him, as happy to them; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, the members of the church militant here below, or those already entered into rest above. How glorious is the sacrifice of Christ, beheld in this delightful view! How justly worthy to be the grand object ever before us, since to it we are indebted for all that we possess here, and all that we hope for hereafter!

5. He mentions with delight the interest which they, to whom he wrote, possessed in all the blessings of this glorious redemption. *And you that were some time utterly alienated from God, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, by nature and by practice rebels against the divine government, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, receiving you into the arms of his mercy, when drawing near to him by faith, through that new and living way which he hath consecrated through the veil of his crucified body; to present you holy and unblameable, and un-reprovable in his sight: and this will be your happy case, both now and for ever, if ye continue in the faith, if ye cleave to Christ perseveringly till death, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, even that substantial hope which springs from the perfect atonement and all-sufficient grace of the great Redeemer: which blessed gospel ye have, through mercy heard; and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, as a common salvation, alike free for Gentiles as for Jews, and extending to all sinners of every rank and condition. Note*, The gospel is grace abounding; none perish because of the greatness of their guilt, but because they reject the only remedy through pride and unbelief, and will not come to Christ, that they might have life.

6. Having mentioned the gospel which was preached unto them, among others who were honoured with the dispensation of it, he humbly inserts his own name, *whereof I Paul am made a minister*, by special commission, on behalf of the Gentiles: *who now rejoice in my sufferings for the glorious truths which I have preached unto them, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in*

5 For, though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

1 Ver. 1. 1 Thel. 2. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 3, 4. & 14. 40. 1 Pet. 5. 9. Rev. 2. 2, 13, 19. & 3. 8, 10. 1 Thel. 3. 8.

my self for his body's sake, which is the church; not that the sufferings of Christ were incomplete, and needed any addition to them in order to perfect the ransom, and make satisfaction to Divine Justice; but as the members of his body are all to go through tribulation to glory, I, who was the instrument of their sufferings formerly, now in turn receive my measure of afflictions, and with holy joy triumph under them, when I have cause to hope that his church and people shall be profited thereby: whereof (of which church) I am made a minister, by a call immediately from heaven, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you Gentiles, to fulfil the word of God, which was commanded me, or in correspondence with the prophecies which had foretold your conversion by the gospel, even the mystery which had been hid from ages, and from generations, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs; but now is made manifest to his saints; his prophets and apostles, and by them to all the faithful: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, who should be admitted to the participation of all the invaluable privileges of the gospel, the author, purchaser, and dispenser of which is Christ in you, formed in your hearts by faith, the hope of glory; whom we preach as the only Saviour of the miserable and desperate; warning every man of the mortal danger of sin, and his inevitable ruin out of Christ; and teaching every man in all wisdom concerning the only method of safety, even faith in a crucified Saviour; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, complete in him as their head, and grown up to the perfection of knowledge, grace, and holiness, in the day of his appearing and glory: whereunto I also labour, striving with every nerve, in the midst of opposing enemies, according to his working which worketh in me mightily, who enables me for the conflict, and crowns my labours with success.

CHAP. II.

IN the preceding chapter, by displaying the power and dignity of Christ, who died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and by teaching that God hath appointed and accepted that sacrifice, the Apostle established the doctrine of the atonement on a sure foundation; and by setting forth the efficacy and extent of the atonement, that, through it, even the Gentiles hope for a glorious resurrection, he greatly recommended the gospel to the Colossians. Farther, by declaring Christ's commission to the apostles to preach salvation to the Gentiles through his death, and by describing his own labours as an apostle in preaching that great blessing, he had vindicated the commission which he had received from God for the communicating and perpetuating of such interesting discoveries. Deeply impressed, therefore, with the importance of these matters, he begins this second chapter with wishing that the Colossians knew what a combat of affliction he was sustaining, for preaching that Jesus Christ is the hope of glory to the Gentiles, ver. 1.—His sufferings for that doctrine he

wished them to know, that the hearts of the Gentiles might be comforted by the full assurance of its truth, which the grace of God, and his sufferings also, as a means of grace, would give them, so as to lead them openly to profess that doctrine. And, because the Heathen Gentiles entertained the highest veneration for the mysteries of their gods, the Apostle, to lead the Colossians to put a just value on the doctrine of the gospel, calls the atonement for the sin of the world made by the death of Christ, and the hope of pardon, and of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, which the Gentiles were allowed to entertain by virtue of that atonement, *The mystery of God and of Christ*: a mystery infinitely more grand, more interesting, and more certain, than any of the mysteries of the heathen deities, of which the Phrygians were so fond, ver. 2.

Farther, to shew the Colossians that the things written in the preceding chapter concerning Christ's being the image of the invisible God, and the Maker and Governor of all things, constitute a principal part of the mystery of God and of Christ, the Apostle introduced the subject anew in this place, by observing that in Christ *are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge laid up*, ver. 3. This second display of Christ's dignity was the more necessary, because the false teachers at Colosse, with a view to discredit his mediation and gospel, affirmed that he was nothing but a man: and talked in the most pompous manner of the dignity and office of the angels, by whom the law was given. This we learn from ver. 4. where the Apostle told the Colossians that he said these things concerning the dignity, the knowledge, and the power of Christ, that no false teacher might deceive them with enticing speeches, for the purpose of discrediting Christ, or of magnifying angels.—Next he assured them that his anxiety for the purity of their faith proceeded from the interest which he took in their affairs, ver. 5. and therefore he commanded them, agreeably to the account given them of Christ, that he is the image of the invisible God, the Maker and Governor of the world, the Saviour of mankind, and the only Mediator between God and man, to walk in him: they were constantly to hold that belief concerning Christ, and to yield him the honour and obedience due to his greatness, ver. 6. and to continue closely united to him, and built upon him, and made firm in the faith of the true doctrine of the gospel concerning his person and offices, as they had been taught: and to give thanks to God for the discoveries made to them concerning Christ's dignity and office, ver. 7. He exhorted them therefore to take care that no false teacher made a prey of them, through the empty and deceitful philosophy of the Platonists, which was calculated to support the heathen idolatry, and was obtruded on them to establish *the worship of angels*, as greater in knowledge and power than Christ; and was contrary to the duty which they owed to Christ, ver. 8. *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, ver. 9.; so that to be made complete, whether in respect of knowledge, or pardon and favour with God, or sanctification, Christ's disciples need

6 As ye have therefore ^b received Christ Jesus the Lord, ^{so} ⁱ walk ye in him :

7 ^k Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught,

^b John, 1. 12. Acts, 16. 31. 1 Cor. 1. 24, 30. Eph. 1. 17. ⁱ John, 14. 6. & 10. 9. 1f. 35. 8—10. 1 Pet. 3. 16. Ch. 3. 17. Heb. 10. 19—23. & 4. 14—16. Jude, 3. 1 Thes. 4. 1. ^k Eph. 2. 21, 22. & 3. 17. Rev. 3. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Pet. 1. 4—9. & 3. 18. Eph. 5. 20. Ch. 3. 17.

not have recourse either to angels or to the law of Moses, or to the Greek philosophy. In every respect they must be *made complete by him who is the head of all government and power*; the head and ruler of all the angelical hosts, ver. 10. In particular, Christ's disciples by the circumcision not made with hands, the Christian circumcision, consisting in putting off the whole mass of the sins of the flesh, are more effectually purified than the Jews were by the circumcision which was made with hands upon their body, or than the heathens by the Pythagorean abstinences and mortifications. So that they had no occasion to have recourse to the bodily circumcision, nor to the mortifications prescribed by the Pythagoreans, to render them complete in respect of purity, ver. 11. This Christian circumcision, he told them, was represented by their baptism, which typified the death of their *old man*, or *nature* through the death of Christ. Moreover, he adds that baptism is a pledge of the resurrection of the faithful with Christ; so that in every respect they might be complete in him through the grace of God, and had no need of the Levitical expiations, ver. 12. For you, Gentiles, although dead through the sins and circumcision of your flesh, God has made alive together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses, ver. 13. And to shew that by his own death Christ hath placed both Jews and Gentiles on the same level, in respect to pardon, the Apostle observed, that he hath blotted out *the hand-writing of ordinances*, because the chief of them were written by God himself; and declared that they were *contrary* to those who were under them, because they subjected them to death for every offence; but that Christ had blotted out the hand-writing, and in its blotted-out state had nailed it to the cross, to make all men sensible that the law of Moses, on account of its weakness, was abolished, together with the curse, ver. 14. Farther, Christ's disciples are made strong in him, in respect of government. For such of the angels as are inimical to mankind he hath stripped of their power by his cross, and hath triumphed over them by means of it. So that no true believer need be terrified when he recollects the malice and power of evil spirits, nor be tempted to worship them, either from hope or from fear, ver. 15.

In what follows, the Apostle gave the Colossians two exhortations, founded on the doctrine that he had laid down in ver. 10. The first was, that since they could be made complete in the knowledge of their duty by the precepts of Christ, they were not to allow any Judaizing teacher to rule them in meats, or in drinks, or a festival, or a new moon, or sabbaths, ver. 16. These, even under the Mosaic dispensation, were of no value, but as shadows of gospel blessings. And therefore, as the body, of which these services were the shadows, was Christ's body, the church; and as all the blessings represented by these shadows were now bestowed by Christ on his church; there was no more need of the Mosaic shadows to prefigure them, ver. 17.

The second exhortation was, That since Christ was the head of all government and power, the Colossians were not to allow any teacher tinged with the Platonic philosophy, to make them lose their reward; namely, the benefit of Christ's mediation, by persuading them from humility to worship angels. These false teachers, by boldly describing the nature and office of the different orders of angels, intruded into things of which they had no knowledge, and were actuated by a foolish vanity, ver. 18.—Besides, they renounced Christ, the head of all government and power, and by whose influence alone the whole body or church groweth. And by renouncing him, they deprived themselves of the benefit of his intercession, and of all the other blessings which he hath purchased for believers, ver. 19.—Having thus taught the Colossians their duty, he said to them, Since by your death with Christ in baptism, and by your professing the Christian faith, you have renounced your former philosophical and religious opinions, in as far as they are contrary to the doctrines of the gospel, why, as if ye still retained these false opinions, have ye subjected yourselves to the ordinances which are built upon them? ver. 20. namely, the Pythagorean precepts, neither eat, nor taste, nor handle, ver. 21.—such meats as occasion the destruction of the life of animals, in order to their being used; that is, eat, &c. no animal food, ver. 22.—which precepts, as well as the precepts of the Platonists formerly mentioned, concerning the worship of angels, have indeed an appearance of wisdom, as they recommend a worship voluntarily offered, together with humility and the mortification of the body: but in reality they are mere foolishness; especially the precepts which enjoin perfect and constant abstinence from all animal food; because they make no provision for the satisfaction of the body, which is as real a part of our nature as our soul, and needs to be strengthened with such food as is fit for it; otherwise it cannot serve the soul in the functions and duties of life, ver. 23.

Ver. 1. What a great conflict] The words and metaphors in this and the preceding verse are taken from the athletic exercises in the Grecian games, and express the great solicitude, the kind of *agony* which St. Paul had upon his mind for them. See 2 Cor. xi. 2. The pains that he took to preach the gospel, and to assert their liberty against such as opposed; the troubles and difficulties which he now underwent upon this account, being actually in bonds for that cause; (ch. i. 24. iv. 3.) and the earnestness with which he prayed for them, are all comprehended in this expression. *Have not seen my face*, might be rendered *have not seen me in person*.

Ver. 2. Might be comforted,] The original word *παρηγορησθε* signifies not only "to have consolation administered under affliction," but "to be *exhorted* and *quicken*ed," "excited and animated; and so recovered from indolence" and irresolution as well as dejection:" the expression rendered *all riches of the full assurance of understandings*, or

abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 ¹ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the * rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For ^m in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are ⁿ complete in him, which is

the head of all principality and power :

11 ^o In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ :

12 ^p Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him

¹ Jer. 29. 8. Rom. 16. 17. Mat. 15. 2. Gal. 1. 14. & 3. 1. & 4. 3, 9. ^m 1f. 7. 14. & 9. 6. 1 John, 1. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 3. Rom. 8. 3. & 9. 5. Gal. 4. 4. ⁿ Eph. 1. 23. & 3. 19. & 4. 10. Col. 3. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 30. John, 1. 16. 3. 3. Rom. 6. 6. & 2. 29. Gal. 3. 27. Eph. 4. 22. Ch. 3. 8, 9. 24. Rom. 4. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 21.

Eph. 4. 14. & 5. 6. Heb. 13. 9. Ver. 15—23. ^o Or elements. Phil. 2. 6—8. John, 10. 30. & 14. 9. 1 John, 5. 7. Tit. 2. 13. ^p Eph. 2. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Deut. 30. 6. & 10. 16. Jer. 4. 4. Phil. Rom. 6. 3—5. Eph. 1. 19, 20. & 2. 5, 6. & 3. 17. & 2. 8. with Acts, 2.

the richest and most assured understanding, is extremely emphatical; more agreeable to the Hebrew than the Greek idiom; and it is one of the many instances of that strong manner of speaking with which the writings of our apostle abound. "The *mystery* here spoken of," says Dr. Heylin, "is the same as before at ver. 27. of the last chapter. I conceive that it relates to the divine paternity and filiation in us [the in-dwelling of the Father and the Son in the hearts of the faithful]. But as it appears from this verse, that the comprehension of that mystery depends upon a certain disposition of heart and enlargement of the understanding, no expression can convey the knowledge of it, until the requisite dispositions are produced." See the preceding analysis.

Ver. 3. *Are hid*] The original signifies any thing that is deposited or treasured up for future service; and is usually applied to money. See Eph. iii. 9. Prov. ii. 4.

Ver. 4. *And this I say*,] Namely, "That all the treasures of wisdom are in Christ,—that you may not be imposed upon by the plausible argumentations of human philosophy." See ver. 8. St. Paul comes here directly to treat of that matter which he chiefly designed in writing this epistle. Though he was well pleased with the Colossians continuing hitherto so steadfast in the doctrine that he had taught, and in maintaining the liberty which they had by Christ, and had therefore bestowed great commendations upon them; yet he was apprehensive of their being in danger from some of the Jewish and Gentile converts, who were endeavouring to seduce and corrupt them. The points in which he judged them most liable to be deceived, were the pretended obligation of the Gentiles to submit to the Mosaic law and the Jewish traditions, and to yield a *worship to angels*; against which he cautions them with much earnestness, shewing them that they had in Christ all that they could pretend to seek for elsewhere; and that by having recourse to the law, they forsook the substance, and embraced shadows only.—That Christ had abolished the obligation to observe the law; that they were obliged by their baptism to refuse the submission urged upon them; and that by paying the respect to *angels*, which was recommended to them, they in effect renounced Christ as their head, upon whom alone their hopes ought to depend, as all their supplies were derived only from him. His discourse, though short, is admirably adapted to his subject, and sets forth, with much magnificence, the

glorious advantages which they had by Christ, above what could be expected from the law, or from the doctrines of the philosophers.

Ver. 5. *Yet am I with you in the spirit*,] As this stands opposed to *in the flesh*, it seems most reasonable to understand it of St. Paul's own spirit, and not, as some have thought, of the Holy Ghost. See 1 Cor. v. 3. 2 Kings. v. 26. The word *τάξις*, rendered *order*, is a military term, and signifies that beautiful order and disposition, in which an army appears when arrayed for battle.

Ver. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you, &c.*] *Make a spoil of you.* The Apostle here refers to the *vain deceit* of *Gentile*, as well as *Jewish philosophy*. The word rendered *rudiments*, *ρουξία*, may undoubtedly signify *shadows*, as opposed to substance; such as the Jewish ceremonies were. But there is a peculiar spirit in speaking of the boasted dictates of Pagan philosophy but as *elements*, or lessons for children, when compared with the sublime instruction to be received in the school of Christ.

Ver. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness, &c.*] *For in him all the plenitude of the Godhead substantially resides.* These words contain an evident allusion to the *Shechinah* in which God dwelt; and so ultimately refer to the adorable mystery of the union of the divine and human natures, in the person of the glorious *Emmanuel*; which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the *most exalted creature*, with the most glorious endowments, could never be of himself.

Ver. 11. *In whom also ye are circumcised*] St. Paul uses this argument in opposition to those who pleaded for the necessity of external circumcision. He assures the Colossians, that they had no need of this circumcision, as they were circumcised with that kind of circumcision which the external rite was intended to express; namely, the *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ*, and initiated by that means into his church, as the members of it formerly were by external circumcision. See the next verse, and Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Ver. 12. *Buried with him in baptism*,] This verse is in pursuance of what is said in the former; namely, to shew that their baptism was an emblem of the true circumcision, inasmuch as thereby they made a profession of being dead with Christ, and of being raised together with him to a new life. Compare Rom. vi. 4. As this church at Colosse was planted earlier than that at Rome, and this epistle was written later than that to the Romans, it more abundantly

from the dead.

13 ^a And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses ;

14 ^b Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ;

15 ^c And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, tri-

umphing over them * in it.

16 ^d Let no man therefore judge you † in meat, or in drink, or ‡ in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days :

17 ^e Which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ.

18 ^f Let no man || beguile you of your reward § in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, ^g intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

^a Eph. 2. 1, 5, 11. Rom. 5. 10. & 6. 4-6, 8, 11. & 7. 4. 6. & 8. 2. ^b Heb. 8. 10, 12. Pf. 32. 1. 2. & 103. 3. If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. & 55. 7. Jer. 31. 24. & 31. 8. ^c Eph. 2. 15, 16. Heb. 7. 18. & 8. 13. & 9. 10. & 10. 9. Rom. 6. 14. & 7. 4. & 8. 1-4. & 10. 4. Gal. 2. 20. & 3. 11. ^d Gen. 3. 15. Pf. 68. 18. If. 53. 12. Mat. 12. 29. Luke, 11. 22. John, 12. 31. & 16. 11. Eph. 4. 8. & 6. 12. Heb. 2. 14. ^e Or in himself. ^f Rom. 14. 3, 10, 13. Gal. 4. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 16. with Lev. xi. xxiii. † Or for eating and drinking. ‡ Or in part. ^g Heb. 8. 5. & 9-9, 10, 20. & 10. 1, 11, 23. John. 1. 17. ^h Ver. 4, 8, 22. 2 John, 8. 1 John, 4. 1. 2 Thel. 2. 3. Eph. 5. 6. Mat. 24. 4. Jer. 29. 8. || Or judge against you. § Gr. being a voluntary humility. ⁱ Pf. 131. 1, 2. Ezek. 13. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 7. Deut. 29. 29.

dantly confirms the *perpetuity of baptism* ; as it supposes all to whom it was addressed to have been partakers of that ordinance, whether they were or were not descended from Christian parents. The reader will observe, that the agent spoken of in this and the three next verses, is God the Father.

Ver. 14. Blotting out the hand-writing, &c.] Having blotted out with respect to us, the hand-writing of Jewish ordinances and institutions, which was contrary to us, (Acts xv. 10.) and had an evident efficacy either to load us with a heavy burden, or to alienate the hearts of our Jewish brethren from us ; and therefore he hath taken it away from between us, as I may express it, nailing it to the cross ; and thereby has cancelled it, as bonds are usually cancelled amongst us, by being struck through with a nail ; while he has accomplished the purposes of the ceremonial law, by that sacrifice of himself ; and thereby caused the obligation of it to cease. The word χειρόγραφον, rendered hand-writing, signifies a note of hand, which acknowledges a debt of duty, and obliges a man to pay it, the Jews bound themselves to God, by their profession of Judaism, not to neglect any divine institution ; in consequence of which, they rejected all communication with the Gentiles ; and thus it was against them ; it was a bill or obligation, which always was to be discharged, and which subjected them to penalties in case of non-payment. Among the Jews there were two ways of cancelling a bond, or writing ; one by blotting, or crossing it out with a pen ; another by striking it through with a nail, as above-mentioned. The first is done by Christ's doctrine, the latter by his crucifixion ; expressed here by nailing it to his cross.

Ver. 15. And having spoiled, &c.] By principalities and powers are generally understood the fallen angels ; our spiritual enemies. The Apostle alludes to the custom of conquerors, who in their triumphs made a shew of their captives. See 2 Cor. ii. 14. Eph. iv. 8. Instead of in or by it, i. e. the cross, whereby these spiritual enemies hoped to have triumphed over Christ, some would read in or by him ; i. e. Christ. Dr. Whitby observes, that Cerinthus and Simon Magus, whose doctrines he imagines the Apostle is

here opposing, pretended to deliver men from the power of evil spirits, by whom they said the world was made and governed.

Ver. 16. Let no man therefore judge you, &c.] " Since therefore the ceremonial law is thus abolished, and since God without it has quickened you Gentiles, who were dead in sins, and uncircumcised ; let no man take upon him to pass sentence upon you, that you belong not to the church of God, because you do not observe the same ordinances with themselves about meats," &c. See Rom. xiv. 3. and the analysis.

Ver. 17. Which are a shadow, &c.] " Which things were only a shadow or type of things that were to come, and which are now actually come ; Christ being the real and substantial blessing obscurely shadowed forth by them ; and while you retain the substance, you will have no need of the shadow."

Ver. 18. Let no man beguile you] This verse is differently understood. Dr. Doddridge translates and paraphrases it as follows : " Let no one, therefore, who may ever so eagerly desire it, or ever so artfully attempt it, deprive you of your great prize, for which, as Christians, you contend, by an [affected] humility, and the worship of angels, which some Jewish zealots, as well as heathen philosophers, so eagerly inculcate ; intruding officiously and presumptuously into that which he hath not seen, while pretending to tell us wonderful secrets relating to the various ranks, subordinations, and offices of these angels. This may render a man the admiration of the ignorant and inconsiderate ; but it is indeed the result of his being vainly puffed up by his corrupt and fleshly mind, with the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion." Mr. Peirce's paraphrase is this : " And since Christ has thus divested principalities and powers, let no man take upon him to condemn you, while he pleases himself with an humility and worshipping of angels of his own devising ; boldly prying into and dictating about matters whereof he knows nothing : and this he is led to by his Jewish temper, which puffs him up with a vain conceit that he

19 And not holding the ^a head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore, if ye be ^b dead with Christ from the ^c rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world; are ye subject to ordinances,

21 (^d Touch not; taste not; handle not; ^e 22. ^e Which all are to perish with the using;) (after the commandments and doctrines of men?)

23 Which things have indeed ^f a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and *neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

^a See ch. 1. 18. 1 Cor. 11. 3. & 12. 12, 13, 27. Eph. 4. 12, 15, 16. & 1. 22, 23. & 5. 23, 30. John. 1. 16. Ver. 70. ^b Rom. 6. 3-8, 11; & 7. 4, 6. Gal. 2. 19, 20. Ch. 3. 3. Rom. 4. 25. ^c Or elements. Ver. 8. 14. Gal. 4. 3, 9. Eph. 2. 15. Heb. 7. 16, 18. & 9. 9, 10. ^d Lev. 11. Deut. xiv. Num. xix. ^e Rom. 14. 17. 1 Cor. 6. 13. Mark. 7. 18, 19. 1 Cor. 8. 8. Heb. 13. 9. ^f If. 29. 13. Mat. 15. 9, 17. Tit. 1. 14. Ver. 3. ^{*} Ver. 18. 1 Tim. 4. 3, 8. & 5. 23. Eccl. 7. 16. 1 Cor. 3. 18. & 4. 6. ^{*} Or punjuring, or not putting.

“knows and is fit to judge of every thing.” It seems much more probable that the Apostle refers to this opinion, than to that of Tertullian, who explains it of “worship taught by angels,” or persons pretending to receive revelations from them. It is uncertain whether the heathens began so early as this to call those celestial spirits *angels* whom they before had called *good demans*; but it is evident that very soon after the Apostle’s days, they speak of *angels*, and *archangels*, and recommend the *worship of them*, under those names. Bishop Burnet justly observes, “That if it had been the Apostle’s intention to give the least encouragement to any religious addresses to saints and angels, this would have been a very natural occasion of introducing the subject, and adjusting its proper boundaries.”

Ver. 20. *Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ*] Mr. Peirce and some others have considered this as the beginning of a new paragraph, addressed particularly to the Jewish zealots at Colosse; and they plead in support of this opinion, that the *subjection to ordinances*, which the Apostle here reproves, is inconsistent with the applauses that he had before bestowed on the *Colossians*. But it seems most natural to suppose that he addresses the society in general, and leaves it to their own consciences to determine which of them deserved the censure. Instead of, *Why are ye subject to ordinances*, Peirce reads, *Why do ye still dogmatize?* Τι δογματίζετε; that is, “require such a compliance as you do, with the injunctions and ritual precepts of the law?”

Ver. 21. (*Touch not, &c.*] “Touch not any thing ceremonially unclean: taste not any food which the law prohibits: handle not any thing by which legal pollutions may be contracted.” The quick succession of these precepts, without any copulative between them, happily expresses the eagerness with which the seducing teachers inculcated these things. But I believe that the Pythagorean philosophy is here also alluded to. See the analysis.

Ver. 22. *Which all are to perish with the using*;] Dr. Doddridge renders and paraphrases this passage thus: “All which things tend to the corruption of that excellent religion, into which you have the honour to be initiated, by the abuse of them.” Mr. Peirce, understanding the three precepts foregoing as referring entirely to meats and drinks, explains this clause, “Which yet were all made by God to be consumed by our use of them.”

Ver. 23. *A shew of wisdom, in will-worship*,] “In performing some acts of voluntary and uncommanded zeal under the guise and affectation of uncommon devotion, in the worshipping of angels, and in austerities and extreme abstinences.” The two last clauses may be transposed, as if it had been said, “It is to such a satisfying of the flesh, as does it no real honour;” a *meisfis*, to express what is dishonourable; whereas the highest honour of our bodies is to be the instruments of our souls in the service of God. It has been observed, that the word *τιμή* signifies *provision*, as well as *honour*; and then the sense will be, that, though there was no appearance of providing for the flesh, yet there was a carnal kind of satisfaction in these affected severities, when proceeding from the principles of vain-glory and ill-nature; which were as contrary to the genius of true religion, as any the grossest sensualities that could be imagined. Mr. Peirce gives the verse a different turn. According to him, the Apostle’s meaning is, “Which things having indeed a shew of wisdom, in will-worship, (ver. 18.) and humility, and neglecting of the body, serve to the dishonourably gratifying persons of a fleshly or Jewish disposition.”

Inferences.—Let us contemplate, with daily pleasure, the glorious effects of the death of our blessed Redeemer, by which the Mosaic law was abolished, the hand-writing of ordinances blotted out—that death, by which so glorious a victory over our spiritual enemies was obtained, by which the infernal principalities and powers were stripped of their trophies, and themselves exposed as an open spectacle. Let us improve this victory to all the glorious purposes for which it was intended. Let us, above all, consider it as an engagement to a life of exemplary holiness, especially as we are ourselves circumcised with the circumcision of Christ; as by baptism we are solemnly engaged to mortify all irregular affections, and, being buried with Christ, to rise to all newness of life, having received the forgiveness of our sins, and being raised with Christ to the hope of eternal glory.

Let us then be solicitous ever to maintain the strictest union with Christ, as our Head, remembering how great an honour it is to be thus related to him, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Let us be careful, in virtue of this union, to live in the fellowship of Christian love with all the members of the body, and ourselves to grow with all the increase of God.

CHAPTER III.

He sheweth how we should seek Christ; he exhorteth to mortification, to put off the old man, and to put on the new man; recommending charity, humility, and several other duties.

[Anno Domini 62.]

IF^a ye then be risen with Christ,^b seek those things which are above, where^c Christ

sitteth on the right hand of God.

2^d Set your * affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For^e ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who*^f is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also^g appear with him in glory.

^a Rom. 6. 4, 5. Eph. 2. 6. Gal. 2. 19, 20. Ch. 2. 12, 13. ^b Mat. 6. 33. & 13. 44—46. 2 Cor. 4. 18. Heb. 11. 13—16. Pl. 73. 25, 26. Ver. 2. ^c Pl. 110. 1. Acts. 2. 34. Eph. 1. 20. & 4. 10. John. 14. 3. & 17. 24. Heb. 1. 3. & 8. 1. ^d See Ver. 1. Phil. 1. 23. & 3. 20. with Phil. 2. 21. & 3. 18, 19. Pl. 17. 14. & 119. 36, 37. Rom. 8. 5, 6. Jam. 4. 4. 1 John. 2. 16, 17. ^e Or mind. ^f Rom. 6. 2—8, 11, 13. & 7. 4, 6. & 8. 2. Gal. 2. 19, 20. & 6. 14. Ch. 2. 20. 2 Cor. 5. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Ch. 2. 10—14. Ver. 4. Ch. 1. 5. Jude. 1. John. 10. 28—30. ^g John. 11. 25. Gal. 2. 20. John. 10. 17, 28. 1 John. 4. 9 & 5. 11, 12. John. 17. 2, 3. & 14. 6. ^h Pl. 26. 19. Pl. 17. 15. 1 Cor. 15. 22, 42—54. Phil. 3. 21. 1 John. 3. 2. 1 Thel. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Mat. 13. 43. Dan. 12. 2, 3. Job. 19. 25—27.

And let us guard against all those human traditions, and all those refinements of philosophical speculation, which are contrary or disagreeable to these elements of Christ into which we have been initiated; and against every thing which could be an infringement of that liberty which Christ has granted to his church, and which it is our duty to endeavour to maintain against all encroachments; even though they should be made by any in *his* name, and under the pretence of authority from *him*. It may be urged upon us as *humility*, to submit to such impositions; but it is the truest humility to maintain an exact obedience to the authority of our Divine Master, and to limit our submission even to those of our brethren whom we may most honour and love, by a regard to *his* command and institution. And if a due care is not taken in this respect, we may be deprived, at least in some degree, of our prize, by the methods whereby some may endeavour to persuade us that we shall most effectually secure it. May Divine Wisdom preserve us from all those vain deceits, whereby our faith might be corrupted, or our conformity to the plan of Christian institutions be rendered, in any respect, less pure, beautiful, and complete.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. Though the Apostle had no personal knowledge of the Colossians, the report that he had heard engaged his warmest affections towards them. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, how solicitous I am for your welfare, and wrestle earnestly with God in prayer on your behalf, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: and this especially I ask of the Lord, that their hearts might be comforted under every trial, with those consolations which he bestows on his faithful people, being knit together in love to Christ and one another, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, seeking to attain the most distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the gospel, with all its invaluable privileges, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; testifying the fullest approbation of that glorious scheme of salvation, which, though unknown before, is now revealed to the Gentiles, wherein God appears as their reconciled God and Father in Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for the use of his believing people, that he might so order all the dispensations of his Provi-*

dence and grace, as most effectually to conduct those who cleave to him perseveringly till death, safe, amidst all their difficulties, to his eternal kingdom. *Note; (1.) It is God's will that his believing people should be comforted; and for this his ministers should labour. (2.) Nothing tends more to cause our consolations to abound than the union of our hearts to Jesus, and to our brethren in love unfeigned. (3.) Whatever remaining ignorance be in us, or darkness surround our steps, he who hath all the treasures of wisdom, is the guide of the faithful; and he will lead them by the right way.*

2dly. The Apostle felt the tenderest concern for them; and he testifies it by his jealousy over them.

1. He warns them against the seducing Judaizing teachers. *And this I say, concerning my affection for you, and the all-sufficient wisdom of Jesus to direct you, lest, as Satan beguiled Eve through his subtilty, any man should beguile you with enticing words, perverting you from the simplicity of the gospel, under pretence of leading you to higher attainments. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit; not only united to them in affection, but probably having some extraordinary discernment of their state from the Lord; joying and beholding your order and strict discipline, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, notwithstanding all the shocks of persecution, or the wiles of deceivers. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, and made profession of your entire dependance upon him as your Prophet, Priest, and King; so walk ye in him, depending on the teachings of his word and Spirit, trusting on his atonement and infinite merit, and desirous to obey his holy will in all things; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, fixed on the rock of ages, and by faith growing up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, as ye have been taught in the gospel preached to you; abounding therein with thanksgiving, enriched with all the fulness of divine grace, and ceaseless in praise to the great Author of all your hopes and happiness. Beware, therefore, since ye have received the truth as it is in Jesus, lest any man spoil you of the inestimable treasure through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the corrupt systems of heathenism, misleading you from the purity of the gospel, after the tradition of men, whether of Judaizing teachers, or Gentile sages, after the rudiments of the world, those first elements,*

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry :

^a Rom. 6. 12, 13. & 8. 13. & 13. 22—24. ² Cor. 7. 1, 11. Gal. 5. 19—21, 24. Eph. 4. 22. & 5. 3—5. ¹ Thes. 4. 5, 6. Mark. 7. 21, 22. ³ Pet. 2. 11.

ments, (σοφισμὰ) contained in the Mosaical œconomy, or in the imaginary writings of the philosophers, and which are not after Christ, but tend to seduce the heart from him, to direct the soul to rest on something else for salvation, besides the great Atonement made by him, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; all the divine perfections being, in their utmost fulness, perpetually resident in the person of the incarnate Jesus. Note; (1.) The discourse set off, with the most enticing words, must be brought to the test of God's revealed will; and if it correspond not therewith, whatever appearances of wisdom there may be, it is to be rejected with abhorrence. (2.) They who cleave to Christ shall be preserved from all dangerous delusion. (3.) He who is God as well as man in one Christ, must needs be able to save to the uttermost, and be the worthy object of our entire faith and dependence.

2. He mentions the salvation, of which, in Christ, they had been made partakers. *And ye are complete in him, in virtue of your union with him, who is, in his mediatorial character, the head of all principality and power; all in heaven, earth, and hell, from the highest creature to the lowest, being made subject unto him. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision, not that which is outward in the flesh, and now of no avail, but that made without hands, even the circumcision of the heart, evident in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and mortifying the old man which is corrupt, with the affections and lusts, by the circumcision of Christ, which he is the author of, and by his Spirit effects in the hearts of his believing people: being buried with him in baptism, the ordinance which he has instituted superseding circumcision, and signifying to us our death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness; wherein also ye are risen with him, quickened to newness of life, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead; and will raise you, if faithful, to the enjoyment of the highest degrees of grace, and the full enjoyment of himself in glory. And you being dead in your sins, under the sentence of God's wrath, and separated from his favour, which is the true life of the soul, and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, serving divers lusts and pleasures, under the dominion of a corrupted nature, hath he quickened together with him, to a life of grace here, having forgiven you all trespasses, in virtue of the redemption of Jesus; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, by his blood cancelling the debt, and abolishing the ceremonial law which separated Jews and Gentiles, and was the cause of enmity between them, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, and rending it in pieces: and having spoiled principalities and powers, the apostate spirits of darkness, he made a shew of them openly, as their conqueror, triumphing over them in it, and redeeming all his faithful people therefrom by their hateful dominion. How invaluable are the*

Christian privileges! how precious should he be to us who is the blessed author of them! (1.) Believers have the free and full remission of all their iniquities. (2.) The curse of the law is satisfied, and there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

3dly, The Apostle, from the foregoing considerations, of the complete atonement which Christ had made for them, and the inestimable privileges and blessings awaiting them in consequence thereof, warns them against the Judaizing zealots.

Let no man therefore judge or condemn you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, inculcating the necessity of observing these Jewish ceremonies, in order to salvation; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ; since he who is the substance of them hath appeared, they are now abolished, and no longer obligatory. Let no man beguile you of your reward, or cheat you of the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus, in a voluntary humility, leading you to a kind of abasement which the gospel never prescribed, and worshipping of angels, to the great dishonour of the one Mediator between God and man; intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, falsely pretending to what he is ignorant of, and following the delusions of a heart eaten up with pride; and not holding the head, Christ Jesus, from which alone all the body of his church, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together spiritually, as the members of the natural body are united to their common head, increaseth with the increase of God, in light, and love, and comfort, and holiness. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, as your baptism intimated, from the rudiments of the world, and discharged from all obligation to the Mosaic œconomy, why, as though living in the world, and still under the legal dispensation, are ye subject to ordinances, and obey the dogmatical decisions of Judaizing teachers, or heathen philosophers, who cry, Touch not, taste not, handle not, as if the Levitical law was still in force, and the distinction of meats and drinks to be scrupulously observed by Christians, or you should embrace the visionary ideas of pagan sages; which meats all are to perish with the using, passing through the body, and cannot defile the soul; and are now no longer enjoined of divine authority, but merely after the commandments and doctrines of men, by these Jewish zealots? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom, and pass under the specious pretence of paying to God service, even of supererogation, in will-worship, and voluntary humility, which his word has never enjoined; and neglecting of the body, by affected austerities, not in any honour; these things are not of any value in the sight of God; but are to the satisfying of the flesh, serving only to foster man's pride, and to flatter him in a vain conceit of his own superior goodness. Note; They who affect to be wise above what is written, will only, in

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the ^k children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

^l If. 3. 11. ¹ Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19—21. Eph. 5. 5, 6. & 2. 2, 3. Rev. 22. 15. & 21. 8. Rom. 1. 18. ^k Eph. 2. 2. Tit. 3. 3. Deut. 32. 5, 20. Rom. 2. 3. & 8. 7, 8. ¹ Rom. 6. 19, 20. & 7. 5. ¹ Cor. 6. 11. Eph. 2. 1—3, 12. Ch. 2. 13. Tit. 3. 3. ¹ Pet. 4. 3.

the issue, expose their own absurd pride and egregious folly.

CHAP. III.

IN the 12th verse of the preceding chapter, the Apostle had told the Colossians, that they had been typically buried with Christ in baptism, in token of their relinquishing their former principles and practices: and that, in baptism likewise, they had been typically raised with Christ, as an emblem and pledge of the resurrection of the faithful saints with him to a spiritual life here, and to eternal life hereafter. The former of these doctrines the Apostle had applied, chap. ii. 20. to shew the Colossians the absurdity of subjecting themselves to the ritual precepts, from which they had been freed by their death with Christ: and now, as the application of the latter doctrine, he told them, in the first verse of this chapter, that if they were really raised with Christ to a spiritual life, they were bound to do their utmost, by faith and holiness, to obtain, through grace, the possession of the joys of heaven, where Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God, vested with full power to bestow these joys on all who are capable of receiving them, ver. 1.—In particular, they were to set their affections on the joys of heaven, and not on the grandeur, the riches, and the pleasures of this earth, ver. 2.—The rather, because, according to the present course of things, they were in danger of being put to death by their persecutors, for their faith, and of losing every earthly enjoyment: or, at any rate, they were to die at length, ver. 3.—Yet the fear of death was no to disquiet them: their bodily life, being entrusted to Christ, will be gloriously restored at the resurrection, if they be faithful unto death: so that, in such case, when he shall appear to raise the dead, and judge the world, they shall appear with him in glorious immortal bodies, and be put in possession of the joys of heaven by his sentence of acquittal, ver. 4.—Wherefore, that they might be capable of this great felicity, the Apostle exhorted them to mortify themselves, not after the Pythagorean manner, but by putting to death their inordinate carnal affections and actions, which he called their *earthly members*, ver. 5.—Then told them, that however pleasing the heathens might think these things were to their gods, they were so provoking to the true God, as to draw down his wrath on the persons who were guilty of them, ver. 6.—And that, though formerly, while heathens, they lived in the habitual practice of these vices, ver. 7.—it now became them, in their christian state, to put them all away, together with anger, &c. ver. 8.—because at their baptism they professed to put off the old man, with his deeds, ver. 9.—By calling *fornication*, with the other vices, *their old man*, the Apostle insinuated that the Phrygians were much addicted to these vices.—Farther, he exhorted the Colossians to put on the new man, who is new-made, through the experimental knowledge of the truth, after the image of God, ver. 10.—

And to encourage them to acquire the new nature of which he spake, he told them, that it communicates such a dignity to the person who possesses it, that God does not regard whether he be a Greek or a Jew, &c. But that in the new creation every man is honourable according to the degree in which he possesses the nature of Christ, ver. 11.—Withal, to shew them the excellence of the new-man, he described his qualities; *bowels of mercies*, &c. and exhorted the Colossians, as elect of God, to put them on, ver. 12, 13.—and over all to put on love, which he represented as a girdle, wherewith the spiritual dress is made perfect, or complete, ver. 14.—Then prayed, that, in consequence of their putting on the qualities above mentioned, the peace of God might rule in their hearts; which was an implied promise that, in such case, so it should be, ver. 15.

Next, because the worshippers of Cybele and Bacchus, feigning themselves to be inspired by these idols, ran through the streets and fields in a frantic manner, committing numberless extravagancies, and singing lewd songs in honour of the gods whom they worshipped, the Apostle, to prevent the Colossians from joining in these madnesses, commanded them to have the word of Christ dwelling in them richly, that is, to call it frequently to their remembrance, and to speak of it to one another, and to get it realized in all its lovely powers in their souls; and, in their social meetings, when they felt themselves moved by the Spirit, instead of singing lewd songs, after the manner of the heathens, to teach and admonish one another by singing psalms, and hymns, and odes dictated by the Spirit; and to do so with true inward devotion, to the honour of the Lord, ver. 16.—And whatever they said or did by inspiration, or at any other time, to do all in such a manner as to promote the honour of the Lord Jesus, whose disciples they called themselves. Farther, because the heathens offered solemn thanksgivings to Bacchus, as the giver of all the good things which mankind enjoy, the Apostle ordered the Colossians to ascribe the honour and praise of all blessings to God alone, who is the real *Father*, or author, of every thing good; and to give him thanks for his favours through the mediation of Christ, ver. 17.

Having thus directed the Colossians to mortify, through grace, their corrupt earthly affections, and to acquire the holy dispositions of the new man, who is created after the image of God, and to avoid imitating the heathens in their lewd speeches and songs; the Apostle, in the remaining part of the chapter, inculcated the relative and social duties of life, that, in their behaviour as citizens, the Colossians might be as much distinguished from the heathens, as they exceeded them in the knowledge of true religion.—His account of relative duties, he began with explaining the duties of husbands and wives, ver. 18, 19.—From these he passed to the duties of children and parents,

8 But now ye also " put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 " Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ;

10 And ° have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of

him that created him :

11 " Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, *nor* free : but ° Christ is all, and in all.

12 " Put on therefore, as the ° elect of God, holy and beloved, ° bowels of mercies, kind-

See ver. 5. Rom. 6. 4, 6, 12. 13. Heb. 12. 1. Jam. 1. 21. Eph. 4. 22, 29, 31. & 5. 4. Lev. 19. 11. Zech. 8. 16. John, 8. 44. Rev. 21. 8, 27. & 22. 15. Eph. 4. 28, 29, 22. Rom. 6. 6. & 8. 13. Gal. 5. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. Rom. 12. 2. John, 3. 3, 5, 6. Eph. 2. 10. & 4. 23, 24. with Gen. 1. 26, 27. 1 Pet. 1. 14—16. Rom. 8. 29. Rom. 10. 12. & 9. 24. & 3. 22. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Gal. 3. 28. & 5. 6. & 6. 15. 1 Cor. 7. 19, 21, 22. Acts, 10. 34, 35. John, 8. 32, 36. 1 Cor. 1. 29—31. & 2. Gal. 1. 16. & 2. 20. & 6. 14. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 1. 21, 23. & 3. 7—10. Ver. 4. Ch. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Rom. 13. 14. Eph. 4. 24. & 6. 11. 2 Pet. 1. 4—9. & 3. 18. 1 Thes. 1. 4. 2 Thes. 1. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 3—11. Rom. 8. 28—34. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Rev. 17. 14. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Eph. 4. 32. & 5. 2. Phil. 2. 3. Gal. 5. 22, 23.

rents, ver. 20, 21.—Then described the duties of servants; on which he insisted at greater length, on account of the difficulty of these duties, ver. 22—25.—And, last of all, he inculcated the duties of masters, chap. iv. 1. with which this chapter should have ended. See Eph. vi.

Ver. 1. *If ye then be risen, &c.*] The Apostle here proceeds, upon the principles that he had laid down, to graft a most important practical exhortation on what he had said; than which nothing could more effectually tend to take them off from those bigotted attachments which he was so solicitous to root out;—a remarkable instance of that happy address which we have so often had an opportunity of observing. See the *Inferences*.

Ver. 2. *Set your affection on things above,*] The original is *mind, regard*: "Prefer and pursue the things that are above."—*Τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε.*

Ver. 3. *For ye are dead, &c.*] "For ye are, by profession and obligation, and all true believers really are, by communion with Christ in his death, dead in your hearts and affections as to the Mosaic law, and crucified with Christ to sin and the world; so as not to seek your portion, and place your happiness, in earthly things: and all the entertainments and enjoyments of your spiritual life are maintained, and carried on, in secret transactions between God and your own souls, by virtue of your mystical union with Christ, your Head, who himself is essentially united with God the Father, as he is in the Son, and the Son in the Father (John, xiv. 11. xvii. 21.) The things of this heavenly life are out of sight, they being hid, as much as Christ himself now is, from an eye of sense, and from the conceptions of a carnal mind: and, after all that believers themselves experience of them, they know not what they shall be." (1 John, iii. 2.)"

Ver. 5. St. Paul, having concluded the principal design of his writing, comes now, according to his usual manner, to give the Colossians some rules and directions for their Christian behaviour and conversation. These rules are of four kinds: *First*, such as concerned themselves personally, and their own purity in abstaining from sensual lusts, ver. 5—7.—*Secondly*, such as concerned them as Christians in society, and were to be observed by them with regard to, and in conversing with each other, ver. 8—17. *Thirdly*, the duties resulting from the several relations that men stand in to each other, ver. 18—ch. iv. 1. *Fourthly*, such as had

respect to their *enemies*, among whom they lived, ch. iv. 2—6. Instead of *covetousness*, the English expositors in general, after Mr. Locke, render the word *πλεονεξία*, *insatiable desire*, or *licentious intemperance*. See Ephes. iv. 19.

Ver. 7. *In the which ye also walked*] *Amongst whom ye also once walked*, [partaking in all their enormities,] *when ye lived among them*. Doddridge. Mr. Peirce paraphrases the verse as follows: "Among which children of disobedience you also some time had your conversation, when, being unconverted, you lived in the commission of those sins."

Ver. 8. *Blasphemy,*] The original word properly signifies *blasphemy*; but it includes not only impious speeches with regard to God, which is the highest degree of malignant language, but all railing and reproachful speeches against our brethren. See Matt. xv. 19. Eph. iv. 31. By *filthy communication*, *obscene* and *lewd* discourse is generally understood. Dr. Whitby explains the original word of *reproachful language*; but the former sense is, I think, rather to be preferred, as *reproachful* language seems abundantly forbidden in the former article; and as in the parallel Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle expressly forbids such filthy communication. See Ephes. iv. 29.

Ver. 11. *Where there is neither Greek, &c.*] St. Paul's main design in this Epistle was, to establish the Colossians in their adherence to the gospel mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, and maintaining their freedom against the Jewish dogmatizers; and though he had already concluded that matter, yet, having it very much at his heart, he takes an occasion here, in the midst of quite other things, to drop a word with relation to it. The sense of the verse is, that, in the point of obtaining acceptance with God, our regard must be paid solely to Christ; upon him alone we must depend, and not upon the Mosaic law, or any other person or thing whatever:—that cordial faith in Christ is the only term on which God insists for justification; and that this is the case in all, or among all men, let them be Jews, or let them be Gentiles; of whatever nation, or whatever condition, it matters not. Upon this term alone they should be received into favour, without submitting to the ordinances which the Judaizers would gladly obtrude upon them. The Apostle seems to make use of a kind of *climax* in mentioning the *Scythians*, as they were reckoned more barbarous than any other barbarous nation.

Ver. 12. *Put on therefore, &c.*] The exhortation in this

ness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

13 ° Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a * quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And ° above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let ° the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 ° Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; ° teaching and admonishing one another in ° psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And ° whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

18 ° Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 ° Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 ° Children, obey your parents in ° all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

21 ° Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

22 ° Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 ° And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 ° Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ° ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 ° But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and ° there is no respect of persons.

° Mat. 6. 14. Mark, 11. 25. 1 Cor. 4. 12. Eph. 4. 2, 32. & 5. 2. 1 Pet. 3. 9. & 2. 23. * Or complaint. ° 1 Pet. 4. 8. & 3. 8. John, 13. 34. & 15. 12. Rom. 13. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. Eph. 4. 3. & 5. 2. Ch. 2. 2. 1 Thes. 4. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 5. 1 John, 3. 23. & 4. 21. ° Ph. 1. 4. 6, 7. John, 14. 27. & 16. 33. Prov. 16. 32. 1 Cor. 7. 15. Eph. 4. 3, 15, 16. & 5. 2, 4, 20. Ch. 1. 12. 1 Thes. 5. 16, 18. ° If. 8. 20. & 34. 16. John, 5. 39. Acts, 17. 11, 2. Job, 23. 12. 2 Tim. 3. 15-17. Pf. 119. 11. Jer. 15. 16. Ch. 2. 3. ° Ch. 1. 28. 1 Thes. 5. 11, 14. ° Eph. 5. 19. Ch. 4. 6. 1 Cor. 14. 15-26. Pf. cslv-cl. ° 1 Cor. 10. 31. Eph. 5. 20. Rom. 1. 8. 1 Thes. 5. 18. 2 Thes. 1. 3. Heb. 13. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. & 4. 11. ° Eph. 5. 22, 24, 33. Tit. 2. 4, 5. Gen. 3. 16. 1 Tim. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 1-6. 1 Cor. 11. 3. & 14. 34. Acts, 5. 29. ° Eph. 5. 25, 28, 33. 1 Pet. 3. 7. Prov. 5. 19. Mal. 2. 11-16. Eph. 4. 31. Ver. 8. ° Eph. 6. 1-3. Exod. 20. 12. Lev. 19. 3. Prov. 1. 8. & 6. 20. Mal. 1. 6. ° Tit. 2. 9. Eph. 5. 24. Acts, 5. 29. ° Eph. 6. 4. Gen. 18. 19. Josh. 24. 15. Prov. 22. 6. & 4. 1-13. ° Eph. 6. 5-7. Tit. 2. 9, 10. 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. 1 Pet. 2. 18-20. Philem. 16. with Gal. 1. 10. 1 Thes. 2. 4. Gen. 42. 18. Prov. 1. 7. ° See Eph. 6. 7. 1 See Eph. 6. 8. ° See Eph. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 7. 22. ° If. 3. 11. Rom. 2. 8, 9. ° Lev. 19. 15. Deut. 1. 17. & 10. 17. & 16. 19. ° Chr. 19. 7. Job, 34. 19. Prov. 24. 23. Acts, 10. 34. Col. 3. 6. Eph. 6. 9. Rom. 2. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 17. Jude, 16.

this verse is not inconsistent with what was said in ver. 10. of their having already put on the new man; as the Apostle intended here to exhort them to advance more and more in those benevolent dispositions which did, through divine grace, in some considerable degree, already prevail in their hearts.

Ver. 14. Put on charity,] "Put on love, which is the bond of that perfect union which ought to reign in the body of Christ, and by which the whole church becomes perfect." See 1 John, iv. 12, 18.

Ver. 15. And let the peace of God rule, &c.] See Philip. iv. 7. The word βασιλευω, rendered rule, is a term borrowed from the Grecian games, and alludes to the office of the master, who presided at those games, deciding all the controversies between the competitors, and determining who should have the preference; in which view the Apostle's meaning is, "Let the peace of God always preside, as the great umpire in your hearts."

Ver. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, &c.] That is, "The gospel which you have received;" which the Apostle exhorts them to lay up in their hearts, to meditate upon continually, and to endeavour to improve wisely to the best purpose. But Peirce and others give a different interpretation, as follows: "It would be of good service to prevent the sins from which I have dissuaded

"you, and to promote the love that I have recommended, if, in your conversing together, you would take care that your discourse and talk should be much of Christ, in all wisdom; and that you entertain each other in conversing together in a Christian manner, teaching and admonishing, &c." See Eph. v. 18-20. Beza, Schmidius, Bengelius, and Gataker point the verse thus: Let, &c. richly: in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms, &c.

Ver. 20. Children, obey—in all things:] That is, "which are lawful, or to which the parental authority extends." This must be understood with some such limitation; and there can be no hurt in supplying the sense from ver. 18. with εν κυριω, in the Lord; and so it is expressed, Eph. vi. 1. That is, "as the Lord requires you, and as far as is consistent with your duty to him."

Ver. 23. Do it heartily,] Εκ ψυχης, from the spirit, or from a spiritual principle, and not from worldly motives." Heylin.

Inferences. How much the metaphorical language of scripture has been mistaken, and what errors and absurdities men have fallen into, under pretence of adhering to the literal sense, is well known. The words of the first verse of this chapter are, however, hardly capable of being

CHAP. IV.

He exhorteth them to be fervent in prayer, to walk wisely toward those who are not yet come to the true knowledge of Christ: he saluteth them, and wisheth them all prosperity.

[Anno Domini 62.]

MASTERS^a, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that

^a Eph. 6. 9. Lev. 25. 43. & 19. 13. Deut. 24. 14, 15. Job, 24. 10, 11. Mal. 3. 5. Jam. 5. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 22. ^b If. 57. 15, 16. & 66. 1, 2. Pl. 115. 3, 16. & 123. 1. ^c See Eph. 6. 18—20. & 5. 4, 20. Rom. 12. 12. & 8. 26, 27. & 15. 30. Luke, 18. 1—7. & 11. 8, 9. Mark, 13. 33. & 14. 38. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Phil. 4. 6. Ch. 3. 16, 17. Jude, 20. Heb. 5. 7. Jam. 4. 8. & 5. 14—16. 1 John, 5. 14, 15. Pl. 50. 15. ^d 2 Cor. 1. 11. Eph. 6. 19. Heb. 13. 18. 1 Thes. 5. 26. 2 Thes. 3. 1. Rom. 15. 30. 1 Cor. 16. 9. 2 Cor. 2. 12. ^e See Ch. ii. & 1. 26, 22. Eph. 3. 8, 7. 1 Cor. 4. 1. Mat. 13. 11. 2 Tim. 3. 16. ^f Ch. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 7, 13. Eph. 3. 1, 13. & 6. 19, 20.

ye also have a Master^b in heaven.

2^c Continue in prayer, and watch in the fame with thanksgiving;

3^d Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the^e mystery of Christ,^f for which I am also in bonds:

fo abused, being a plain inference from what had before been advanced, as is evident from the manner in which they are introduced; “*If ye then be risen with Christ.*” It is plain, therefore, that they must refer to something which had been said of our *resurrection with, or in Christ*, since this conclusion supposes that doctrine already laid down and established. To find this connection, we must look back to the middle of the foregoing chapter, (ver. 10. &c.) where the doctrine here referred to is plainly declared. *And ye are complete in him,* (that is, in *Christ Jesus*), &c. and *you—hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*; whence the inference above drawn naturally follows, *If ye then be risen with Christ, &c.*

The better to explain this inference, it may be necessary to consider the representation which the scripture makes of the *natural state* of man, and of his *gospel state*, on becoming a real Christian.

1. The *state of nature* is fully represented, Eph. iv. 17, 18. ii. 2, 3, 12. Rom. vi. 19, 20. to which passages the reader may refer. And because, in the mere state of nature, abstractedly considered from every operation of divine grace, there is no goodness whatever in man, therefore this state of sinful nature is called likewise a *state of death*, Ephes. ii. 1, 5. While men were thus *dead to God* and to themselves, they lived only to sin and unrighteousness; and sin therefore is said to *reign in them*,—to *have dominion over them*. In this state of corruption, the natural passions and affections were but the instruments of sin, in all things subservient; on which account they are said to constitute the *body of sin*; that body over which sin, as the soul, or active principle, had entire rule and dominion; (see Rom. vi. 6. Col. ii. 11.) and whose *members* are described in the chapter before us, ver. 5. and this body is elsewhere called by our Apostle, *the body of death*, for the same reason that the state of sin is called the *state of death*, Rom. vii. 24.

Now the body, together with the *soul*, which is the active principle of life, the influencer and director of the body, and all its motions, constitutes *the man*: hence, therefore, by an easy and natural metaphor, those depraved appetites and affections, which are the *instruments*, or *members of sin*, and which compose the *body of sin*,—together with the evil principle ruling in us, and directing the affections in the pursuit of all uncleanness and iniquity, and which is called *sin*,—are said in scripture to be *the old man*;

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the only man which lives before the regeneration by Christ Jesus. Comp. Rom. vi. 6. Ephes. iv. 22.

2. This then is the *state of nature* according to the representation and language of Holy Writ; and it is easy to see what must become of this *old man*, this *man of sin*, upon the appearance of Christ Jesus, who came to *destroy the works of the devil*; to give life and light to those who sat in the shadow of darkness and death: *he* and his works must be destroyed, where Christ is fully revealed, to make way for the Spirit of righteousness and his holy works; and to introduce man to the *second, or gospel state*.

But thus to destroy the old man,—to root out all the corrupt affections of nature, and to implant a new principle of life and holiness, to restore the lost image of God,—to give new desires to the soul, new affections to the heart;—what is it, but to new-make the man, and, by a second creation, to restore him to those rights and privileges of the first, which were long since forfeited by sin and disobedience? For this reason the *Christian* is said to be a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. Eph. ii. 10. iv. 23, 24. Nay, and we are said even to *put on Christ*, from the similitude of will and affections between Christ and his true members. Gal. iii. 27.

From this account it is easy to understand the propriety of the phrases used to express these *two conditions*. Sometimes we read that we were *dead* before the knowledge of Christ: sometimes that we *died* and were *buried with Christ*: again, that we *rose with Christ*, and are *alive in him*. Now to be *dead* before the coming of Christ, and yet to *die with Christ* after his coming, and yet still to be *alive in him*, may seem to be assertions inconsistent, with respect to the *same person*; but if we take the same view of man that the scripture does, the inconsistency will soon vanish and disappear.

Man was at first created *after the image* and likeness of God, with a perfect rectitude of mind and will; with inclinations adapted to his true happiness, and entirely subject to the influence and direction of reason: but, upon his disobedience, man became a quite *different person*; his understanding was darkened, his will corrupted, his inclinations distorted to the pursuit of evil continually. This change was a real *death* of the man created after the image of God; he could no longer exercise any of the functions proper to his life, but lay buried under the ruins of sin.—And this was the *death of the world* before the knowledge of Christ.

3 U

What

4 That I may make it manifest, ^a as I ought to speak.

5 ^b Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

^a Mat. 10. 27, 28. 1 Cor. 9. 16. Eph. 6. 19, 20. Rom. 7. 9, 16. 1 Cor. 2. 4. 2 Cor. 2. 14. & 3. 12. & 4. 2. ^b Mat. 10. 16. 1 Thel. 5. 12. Eph. 5. 15, 16.

What then was the *life of the world* at the coming of Christ?—It was the *life of sin*; of the earthly man, made not in the *image of God*, but after the likeness of the son of disobedience: To destroy this man of sin, Christ came into the world; and *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*: Gal. v. 24. And thus, with respect to the life we had at the coming of Christ, which was the life of sin,—believers are said to *die with Christ*, and to be *buried with him*, because they renounce that life, and the affections proper to it. Thus *dying to sin*, we begin to *live again unto God*, and to true holiness: and this is a *resurrection* of the man made after the image of God, which before was *dead in trespasses*; and therefore we are said to be *made alive to Christ*, and to *rise together with him*.

But further: this change was what, by nature, we had not power so much as to wish for, or desire for ourselves: but Christ undertook our cause: he took our nature and our iniquities upon himself, and underwent death in behalf of all. He dying therefore upon the cross for all, all may be crucified with him, through the power of his grace and spirit. See Heb. ii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 14. And the way to attain to the benefits of the death of Christ, is, as we learn from St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, to be, through his grace, *conformable unto his death*. This conformity consists, as we have seen, in dying to sin, and the affections of it; in putting off the old man, and in putting on the *new man, who is created after righteousness*: and this the Apostle styles *being planted in the likeness of his death, and being planted in the likeness of his resurrection*: Rom. vi. 5. To which likewise he plainly refers, ch. viii. 29. and there are many other precepts in scripture, founded upon this notion of our conformity with Christ.

Indeed, the very essence of Christianity consists in this conformity; and therefore baptism, which is our admission to the gospel, is a sacred emblem of this conformity. (See Rom. vi. 3. 4.) To *walk in newness of life*, is our conformity to the resurrection of Christ, which was to new life and glory.

If we bear in mind the above account of the scripture language, and the reasons upon which it is founded, it will be a key to open to us the meaning of many, otherwise intricate, passages of scripture. For instance, we shall not be to seek, when we find mention made of *two deaths*, which we must undergo,—and of *two resurrections*, in which we must partake: we shall easily distinguish between the natural death of the body, and the death unto sin;—between the resurrection to life eternal hereafter, and the resurrection to holiness and righteousness in this present world. *I am crucified to the world*, says St. Paul, *and the world to me*.—*Whoever is born of God*, says St. John, i. e. *whoever is begotten to this new life in Christ by the power of God,—overcometh the world*. Again, St. Paul tells us, that the Spirit of God will *quicken our mortal bodies*, as well as our dead bodies, which is not to be un-

derstood, without having recourse to the *first resurrection*, which is to a *new life of holiness*, and which must be the forerunner and introducer of the *second resurrection* to glory. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, tells us that he willingly *suffered the loss of all things*, that he might *know Christ, and the power of his resurrection*; and this he desired to know, that he might *attain to the resurrection of the dead*. Phil. iii. 10, 11. where, if we remember what has been said of our being *made conformable* to the death and resurrection of Christ, by rising to holiness and righteousness, we shall not be at a loss to understand what it is to *know* or *feel the power of Christ's resurrection*; or to understand how the *knowing the power* of Christ's resurrection should be a means of *attaining the resurrection of the dead*.

Such is the power of Christ's resurrection, that those who feel it, have (as the Apostle informs us, Phil. iii. 20.) *their conversation in heaven*; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. This, which St. Paul calls knowing the power of Christ's resurrection, and having our conversation in heaven, the author to the Hebrews calls, *tasting the powers of the world to come*, ch. vi. 5. This resurrection is, indeed, one of the *powers of the world to come*, which all partake in, and taste of, whose mortal bodies are quickened by the Spirit of God. In the verse after this, it is said, that those who fall from their faith, *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame*. How does he who falls away, *crucify Christ, or put him to open shame*?—This cannot be understood but by having recourse to the scripture representation already explained: but if we remember that all who are baptized by the Spirit of God, who realize that spiritual baptism which is typified by the external ordinance, *crucify the old man with his deeds*; that they *put on the new man, created after holiness*; that the Apostle to the Galatians expressly says, that *as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*; it will readily appear why it is that those who *fall away* crucify Christ afresh. For, by *receiving the true faith*, they have put on Christ, and crucified the old man and his deeds; but if they *desert the true living faith*, and return to their former deeds, and again put on the old man, they do then crucify Christ again with his deeds, and put him once more to open shame.

This notion of the different states and conditions of man,—of the death of the old man,—of a new creature in Christ,—runs through the precepts, exhortations, and doctrines of the gospel, which cannot be understood but with analogy to this notion. We have considered already our death, and burial, and resurrection with Christ; but the Apostle, in the passage now before us, carries the metaphor still one degree higher: *If ye then be risen, &c.* as if he had said, "It is not enough that ye are risen from the dead with Christ; you must also ascend after him into heaven, for there is our life hid in Christ; there are your true riches, and thither must you go to take care

6 ¹ Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye

ought to answer every man.

7 ^k All my state shall Tychicus declare unto

¹ Ch. 3. 16. Eph. 4. 29. Eccl. 10. 12. Luke, 4. 22. Pl. 45. 2. Prov. 10. 31. Mark, 9. 50. 1 Pet. 3. 15. ^k See Eph. 6. 21, 22. Ad. 20. 4. 2 Tim. 4. 12.

care of them. You are dead to the world, and as such can no longer live to it; your life is spiritual and heavenly: as is your life, such must be the actions which flow from it,—the inclinations which attend it. Since, therefore, you are dead to the world, and alive to Christ, through the spirit of holiness, you must act like members of Christ, and *set your affections on things above*, where Christ your life is ascended.

Hence it is that St. Paul so often exclaims against the absurdity of a Christian's living in sin. You may just as well say, that all the actions of life may be performed in the grave, when a man is dead and buried, as say that a Christian may continue in sin: for a Christian has crucified and buried the body of sin. *How* then, as the Apostle cries out, *how shall we, who are dead to sin, continue any longer therein?* Sin is the only poison by which the life of Christ, which is in us, may be destroyed. It is a life which no man can take from us but ourselves. Those who kill the *body* cannot reach it: not all the powers of darkness, sin only excepted, can separate believers and their Lord; but every unmortified lust, every unsubdued vice, is a canker that eats into our very vitals, and, if we do not cut them off, will, in the end, destroy us quite. Holiness is as necessary to our spiritual life, as eating and drinking are to our natural; and therefore the Apostle's conclusion in the text is most obviously just; *If we be risen with Christ*,—if we live with him, *we must seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

REFLECTIONS.—1. The Apostle having, in the former chapter, laid down the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and the invaluable privileges of true believers, proceeds in this to exhort the Colossians to those tempers and practices which became their holy profession.

1. He exhorts them to heavenly-mindedness. *If ye then be risen with Christ*, in virtue of his resurrection, and of your union with him, *seek those things which are above*; even the eternal blessedness provided for all the faithful in heaven, *where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*, gone before to prepare a place for them, and ever living to make intercession for them. Therefore, *set your affections on things above*, with faith, hope, and love, aspire after them, realizing them to your mind by frequent meditation and fervent prayer, seeking those influences of grace which may conduct you to the glory that shall be revealed; and *not on things on the earth*, whether Jewish ordinances, or earthly advantages and allurements; keep these under your feet, be weaned from them, and daily dying to them. *Note*: a worldly mind, and a heavenly hope, are utterly inconsistent; no man can serve two masters.

2. He supports his exhortation by the most powerful arguments. *For ye are dead*, by your profession in baptism, and your obligations to a crucified Jesus; *and your life is hid with Christ in God*, your spiritual life, with all its joys,

is hid from the natural man, and is still maintained, by secret communications from your exalted Head: therefore, having such glorious expectations, look up, and live continually under the influence of them. And then, *when Christ, who is our life*, the author, support, and finisher of it, in all his faithful saints, *shall appear* in the great day of his second coming, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory*; and how much then does it behove us to have our affections placed there, where we hope to spend an eternity with Christ in blessedness inconceivable?

2dly, If we would set our affections on things in heaven, our sensual and earthly affections must be mortified; and hereunto the Apostle earnestly exhorts them. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth*, the remaining corruptions that still war against you; such as *fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence*, with every thought, word, or action, which has the remotest tendency to excite impure desire; and *covetousness*, with every worldly lust, *which is idolatry*, as it engages the heart to the creature, drawing it off from the love and service of the Creator: *for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience*; and the consequences of these sins will infallibly be eternal death. *In the which ye also*, as other Gentiles, *walked sometime, when ye lived in them*. But now, since the light and grace of the blessed gospel has reached you, *ye also put off all these*; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, speaking reproachfully of God or things sacred, or whatever would blast the reputation of others; and let no *fleshy communication*, or immodest expression, proceed out of your mouth. *Lie not one to another*; but ever, in all your conversation, speak the truth from your heart, and be faithful to every promise and engagement; *seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds*, the native corruption which came with you into the world, and which works to bring forth fruit unto death, till subdued by the power of divine grace; *and ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*; the heart, by the powerful operations of the Spirit, being renewed after the likeness of Jesus the Creator, in light and holiness; and his image defaced by the fall, being now restored by the grace of God. *Where*, in this new creation, *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free*; all distinction of nations, names, conditions, and external privileges is now abolished: *but Christ is all and in all*; in all who believe; there he dwells, their *Prophet*, to teach them; their *Priest*, to atone for them; and their *King*, to reign in them and over them. *Note*: (1.) We must mortify sin, or sin will eternally destroy us. (2.) Nothing is more dangerous than fleshy lusts, which war against the soul, unless it be the corroding canker of covetousness, which, though it may less shock the conscience, is as fatally ruinous. (3.) The longer we have lived in sin, the more urgently are we called to awake

you, *who is*¹ a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord :

8 Whom^m I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and

¹ Heb. 13. 1. Rom. 12. 10. 1 Cor. 3. 5, 9. & 4. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. & 4. 5, 7. & 6. 1—10, 20. 12. 15. & 15. 1—3. Gal. 4. 19. & 6. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 2, 28, 29.

^m See Eph. 6. 22. 1 Thes. 3. 2. Rom.

to newness of life ; the time past may surely suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh. (4.) Anger, malice, slander, and lies, are the strongest lineaments of him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning. (5.) If we belong to Christ, we must prove it by the conformity of our temper and conduct to his ; he that abideth in him ought himself to walk as Christ also walked. (6.) If Christ be to us *all in all*, then are we bound to ascribe to him the glory of all our salvation.

3dly, The Apostle proceeds to enforce the practice of all godliness upon them, *as the elect of God*, called to be *holy and beloved* by him ; who therefore should approve themselves before him.

1. *Put on therefore bowels of mercies*, such as were in Jesus Christ, towards the miserable and afflicted, *kindness* in every word and deed, *humbleness of mind*, being lowly in your own thoughts of yourselves, and condescending to others ; *meekness*, quietly submitting to the dispensations of Providence, and enduring patiently every reproach and indignity ; *long-suffering* under repeated and aggravated provocations ; *forbearing one another* under your several infirmities, *and forgiving one another* every offence or injury, *if any man have a quarrel against any : even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*, whose amazing grace to us should powerfully engage our hearts to pass by each other's transgressions, and not only to forgive, but to blot out of our remembrance every past offence. *And,*

2. *Above all these things*, as that which is most singularly necessary, or *over all these things*, as what sets them off in their brightest lustre, *put on love*, that divine principle of all that is excellent, *which is the bond of perfectness*, uniting the whole body of the church together in pure love, and most effectual to preserve them until they arrive at the consummation of their happiness and union in glory.

3. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts* ; being at peace with him, carefully cultivate peace with each other ; and let a sense of his reconciliation to you sway your hearts to mutual love and forbearance ; *to the which also ye are called in one body*, as together united to Christ your common head ; *and be ye thankful* for this invaluable blessing.

4. *Let the word of Christ*, his blessed gospel, *dwell in you richly*, abiding in your hearts, the subject of your constant meditations, and delightful converse ; esteem it as your most invaluable treasure, and store up the knowledge of it in your hearts, *in all wisdom*, ready for use on every proper occasion.

5. As united in love, be *teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*, building up each other thus on your most holy faith, and helping forward your mutual joy in God, and his blessed service. *Note* ; It is not the music of the voice, but the singing with grace in the heart, which is the acceptable praise.

6. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, under the influence of his grace, with a regard to his will, and a single eye to his glory, expecting the acceptance of every service for his sake alone, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him*, in whom our praises and prayers come up before the throne as sacrifices of a sweet smell. *Note* ; a Christian can never want matter of praise, whenever he turns his thoughts toward the Lord Jesus.

4thly, The Apostle passes on to inculcate the due discharge of the great relative duties ; and he begins as before (Eph. v. 22,) with the inferior relation, as subjection is peculiarly hard for creatures who are naturally under the power of a spirit of pride and independence. We have,

1. The duty of *wives*. *Submit yourselves unto your own husbands* ; be under their government, *as it is fit in the Lord*, according to the law of creation, and the divine constitution ; obedient in all things which are not inconsistent with your duty to the Lord Jesus.

2. The duty of *husbands*. *Love your wives* with all tenderness and singleness of affection, delighting in their company, and studying to make them happy in their relation to you ; *and be not bitter against them*, cross, hasty, arbitrary, severe, making them afraid with frowns of wrath, or ill usage.

3. The duty of *children*. *Obey your parents in all things* that are lawful, neither murmuring nor disputing against their commands, or disposals ; *for this is well pleasing unto the Lord*, and a happy proof of your relation to the Father of mercies.

4. The duty of *parents*. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger*, by needless severities, arbitrary restraints, harsh commands, and unreasonable impositions ; *lest they be discouraged*, their spirits broken with such treatment, and, through despair of pleasing, they should desist even from the attempt.

5. The duty of *servants*. *Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh*, whether Gentile or Christian ; diligently to observe all their just commands, *not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers*, merely while they are looking on you, *but in singleness of heart fearing God*, and equally faithful in the discharge of your duty, when no eye seeth you but his, to whom it is your special care to approve yourselves : *and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily*, working with willingness and assiduity, *as to the Lord*, for his glory, *and not unto men*, merely with a view to their applause ; *knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance*, if faithful, when the great Master shall appear, to recompense the fidelity of his servants, in whatever condition or rank they have been placed by him : *for ye serve the Lord Christ* ; and whatever service ye do to them, with a view to his honour, he will regard it as immediately rendered to himself, and reward it accordingly. *But he*

comfort your hearts ;

9 With ^o Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who *is one of you*. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done here*.

10 ^o Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth

you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments : if he come unto you, ^p receive him ;)

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are*

^o Philem. 10—19. Eph. 6. 21. Heb. 3. 1. ^o Acts, 19. 29. & 20. 4. & 27. 2. Philem. 24. Acts, 12. 12, 25. & 15. 37, 39. 2 Tim. 4. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 13. ^p Rom. 15. 7. & 16. 2. 1 Cor. 16. 10, 11.

that doeth wrong to his master, by fraud, connivance, sloth, or negligence, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done the punishment due to his injustice : and there is no respect of persons with God ; the meanest at his bar being accountable, as well as the greatest, and shall receive sentence according to their deeds.

CHAP. IV.

HIS account of relative duties the Apostle finishes in the beginning of this chapter, with a direction to masters to be not only just in maintaining their servants properly, even after they have become incapable of serving them, but also generous in bestowing rewards on such of them as distinguish themselves by their ability and faithfulness, ver. 1. Here the third chapter ought to have ended : or rather at chap. iii. 17.

To render his practical admonitions the more complete, the Apostle recommended to the Colossians perseverance in prayer with due thanksgiving, as the best means of obtaining God's assistance to enable them to fulfil all the duties of life, ver. 2. Next he entreated the Colossians to pray for him, that God would grant him an opportunity to preach the true doctrine of the gospel freely, for which he was in bonds, ver. 3. and courage to preach it in that bold manner, which became him whom Christ had made his apostle to the Gentiles, ver. 4. Then he counselled the brethren to beware of provoking the heathens by any imprudent display of their zeal ; but rather, by conducting themselves wisely, to avoid persecution, as far as was consistent with duty, ver. 5. and in particular, when conversing with unbelievers, to make their discourse mild and courteous ; but at the same time to season it with the salt of wisdom and truth ; that they might be able to answer every person properly, who inquired into the grounds of their faith, ver. 6. And after telling them that he had sent Tychicus and Onesimus to give them an account of his affairs, ver. 7, 8, 9. he presented the salutations of the brethren, by name, who were with him, ver. 10—14, and desired them in his name to salute the brethren in Laodicea, ver. 15. Moreover, to convince the Colossians that his doctrine and precepts were every where the same with those contained in this letter, he ordered them, after they had perused it, to take care to have it read in the church of the Laodiceans ; and to read in their own church the epistle which was to come to them from Laodicea, supposed by some commentators to be the epistle to the Ephesians ; a copy of which, it seems, was to be sent by the Ephesians to Laodicea, for the benefit of all the churches in that neighbourhood, ver. 16. Next he desired them to encourage Archippus in the work of the ministry, ver. 17. then wrote the salutation with his own hand ; and conclu-

ded the whole with giving them his apostolical benediction, ver. 18.

Ver. 3. *Praying also for us,*] Dr. Whitby justly observes, that it is very remarkable that St. Paul, who so often and so earnestly entreats the intercession of his Christian friends, should never speak of the intercession of the Virgin Mary, or of departed saints or angels, if he believed it a duty to seek it.

Ver. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace,*] “ Always conducted in the most mild and courteous, the most proper and graceful manner ; so that it may appear influenced by a governing principle of divine grace and unfeigned piety in your hearts. Let it in this respect be so seasoned with the salt of heavenly wisdom as may render it savoury and edifying. In this view reflect upon things and circumstances before you speak, that you may not utter any thing which would be rash and foolish, but may know how you ought to answer every one who may question you about your religion and your conduct, in such a manner as may most effectually and jointly tend to your own security and that of your brethren, and the edification of others.” See 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Ver. 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare*] From comparing this verse with Eph. vi. 21, 22. where Tychicus is mentioned as sent by St. Paul from Rome to Ephesus, which was not very far from Colosse, it may be very probably inferred, that these two epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, which contain many similar passages, were written about the same time, and might be sent together.

Ver. 9. *With Onesimus,*] This verse makes it possible, that this epistle, if it was not written after, was at least delivered after that to Philemon ; and that the admirable letter to him, produced its desired effect. See the introductory note to Philemon.

Ver. 10. *Aristarchus,*] See Acts, xv. 37, 38. xix. 29. xx. 4. Aristarchus and Epaphras are mentioned as saluters in this epistle, and in that to Philemon written at the same time. Instead of, *Ye received commandments, &c.* Doddridge reads, *Ye have received instructions* ; and Heylin, *letters of recommendation* ; adding, *If he come, do you give him a kind reception.* See Acts, xvii. 15. The original word, rendered *commandments*, has doubtless that meaning ; but as civility teaches us to esteem the reasonable desires of friends, as carrying in them the force of commands, though they pretend not to use any authority ; hence the same mode of speech is familiar, not only in ancient, but in modern languages ; by which the word *commands* is used for *recommendation*.

Ver. 11. *These only are my fellow-workers*] That is. he had none other of the circumcision ; for Luke and Demas were with him. See the next note.

Ver.

my ^a fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

12 ^r Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, ^s always ^{*} labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand ^t perfect and [†] complete in all the will of God.

13 ^u For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in ^x Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 ^y Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and ^z the church which

is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read amongst you, ^a cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

17 And say to ^b Archippus, ^c Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 The salutation ^d by the hand of me Paul. ^e Remember my bonds. ^f Grace be with you. Amen.

Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.

¹ Ver. 7. ¹ Cor. 3. 5, 9. & 4. 12. ² Cor. 3. 6. & 5. 20. Phil. 1. 14, 17. ³ Ch. 1. 7. Philem. 23. Ver. 7. ⁴ Rom. 15. 30. Jam. 4. 16. Gal. 4. 19. Eph. 6. 18. ⁵ Or *striving*. ⁶ Mat. 5. 48. ⁷ 1 Cor. 2. 6, 15. & 14. 20. ⁸ 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 2. 15. & 3. 15. Ch. 1. 22, 23. Heb. 5. 14. ⁹ Or *filled*. ¹⁰ Not Rom. 10. 2. but ver. 12. Ch. 1. 28, 29. ¹¹ Rev. 1. 11. & 3. 14—17. Ver. 15, 16. ¹² Luke, 1. 3. Acts, 1. 1. ¹³ 2 Tim. 4. 10, 11. Philem. 24. ¹⁴ Rom. 16. 5. ¹⁵ 1 Cor. 16. 19. Philem. 2. ¹⁶ 1 Thes. 5. 27. ¹⁷ Philem. 2. ¹⁸ Luke, 1. 3. 4. 1, 2. ¹⁹ 1 Tim. 4. 6, 12—16. & 6. 20. ²⁰ 2 Tim. 2. 2, 3, 15, 22—26. & 4. 2, 5. Ch. 1. 25, 28, 29. Rom. 15. 27. Acts, 20. 18—35. & 14. 26. Luke, 9. 62. ²¹ 1 Cor. 16. 21. ²² 1 Thes. 3. 17. ²³ Heb. 13. 3. Rom. 12. 15. & 15. 30. ²⁴ 2 Tim. 1. 8. ²⁵ Rom. 16. 20, 24. ²⁶ 2 Cor. 13. 14. Phil. 4. 23. ²⁷ 1 Thes. 5. 28. ²⁸ 2 Thes. 3. 18. ²⁹ 1 Tim. 6. 21. ³⁰ 2 Tim. 4. 22. Tit. 3. 15. Philem. 25. Heb. 13. 25. Rev. 20. 21.

Ver. 14. Luke, the beloved physician,] From comparing this with ver. 11, where St. Paul says he had no fellow-labourer of the circumcision but those whom he had named, Lord Barrington concludes that Luke was a proselyte of the gate before he was converted to Christianity; and it may certainly be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew. See the introductory note to St. Luke's gospel.

Ver. 16. The epistle from Laodicea.] The epistle from Laodicea could not have been written by St. Paul from thence, since he had never been there, ch. ii. 1. It seems probable that it was either his epistle to the Ephesians (see the analysis), or some letter which he had written to those of Laodicea; of which, when the Colossians sent a copy of their letter, the same messengers were to bring a copy from Laodicea. Whatever the letter was, it is lost; *that* which has appeared in the world being too contemptible a forgery ever to be taken for the writing of St. Paul, by persons of the least degree of sense and judgment.

Ver. 17. Say to Archippus, &c.] This seems an intimation that Archippus was not so diligent and active in the prosecution of his ministry as could have been wished. Dr. Heylin says he then performed the pastoral office among the Colossians, instead of Epaphras the bishop, who was detained at Rome.

Inferences.—How happy will particular persons, families, and larger societies be, if the apostolic maxims of our apostle, concerning the relative duties, be carefully pursued, while wives are submissive to their husbands, and husbands affectionate to their wives; children obedient to their parents, and parents tenderly careful of their children; servants revering the commands of their masters, and conscientiously and constantly attending to their interests; and masters concerned to maintain all equity in their behaviour to their servants, and especially towards those of their servants who are most entirely in their power; remembering on all sides the account to be given to the Supreme Master in heaven, and humbly looking for the reward of the inheritance.

To engage a steady and uniform care in all these various duties, and to make us truly good in every relation of life, let us daily be drawing down grace from God by continuing instant in prayer; and, as our spirits are so ready to grow cold and indifferent in it, let us watch thereunto, lest by insensible degrees we grow remiss in the performance, and from that remissness come entirely or frequently to neglect it.

And let every mercy that we receive from God, awaken our thankfulness, and animate our devotion: and let us not forget in our prayers the ministers of Christ; but ask for them those assistances from on high, which may enable them to *open their mouths boldly*, in declaring that mysterious and important doctrine with which they are charged, and on which the salvation of immortal souls depends.

To enforce their labours as much as possible, let us add the influence of a regular and amiable behaviour, conducting ourselves with wisdom towards all, and particularly towards those who are strangers to religion; and redeeming time, as those who know its infinite importance, because they see eternity connected with it. And that we may not, as is so frequent, lose the time we spend in conversation, let us seek more of the salt of Divine grace in our hearts, to correct and destroy their innate corruption, and learn the happy art of improving discourse well, and of answering others in such a manner, that, without dictating to them, we may gently lead them to the most useful reflections, and make our lips, like those of the righteous, a fountain of life unto them. (Prov. x. 11.)

Again. The friendly disposition of St. Paul fails not to shew itself in the close, as well as entrance of every epistle, and indeed runs through all the parts of each. It cannot but give some pleasure to the pious reader, to whom the memory of such a servant of Christ will always be precious, to find that there were some even of the circumcision, who were comforts to him in his affliction; as well as that John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, was so thoroughly reconciled, and made one of his most agreeable and useful friends; though there was a time when St. Paul thought it

it inconsistent with prudence and duty to admit him as a companion. *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.* (Prov. xxviii. 23.) And if the faithfulness of plain rebukes may be the means of recovering our brethren to a sense of their duty, they will no doubt be sensible of the obligation, and it will add firmness and endearment to future friendship.

When Epaphras was at a distance from his brethren at Colosse, he was not only praying for them, but, as the word signifies, *wrestling with God in his prayers on their account*, a very strong evidence of his Christian affection for them. And how well were his petitions chosen!—that they might not only be sincerely good, as they already were, but *perfect and complete in all the will of God*; that there might be, in their hearts and actions, a more entire conformity to it. May that be our character and happiness, to have respect to all God's commandments, and to carry our regards to them as far as we possibly can.

Commendable, and perfectly consistent with the strictest modesty, was the concern which the Apostle expresses, that his Epistles might be diffused as far as possible, and the Christians, in different societies, might receive the benefit of them. And, indeed, they turn so much upon matters of universal moment, that they are admirably calculated for the edification of those who may live in the most distant countries and ages; and surely there cannot be a more sacrilegious attempt upon Christian liberty and piety, than to take them away from the common people, to whom St. Paul expressly ordered they should be *publicly* read: nor can there be greater madness than to pretend to guard men from error and heresy, by concealing from them writings which the Holy Spirit himself dictated, to lead them to truth and holiness.

We know not what there might be so particular in the character or circumstances of Archippus, as to require the solemn admonition with which the epistle closes. But whatever the occasion of it was, it certainly suggests a most useful and important thought to all the ministers of the gospel. It is of the Lord Jesus Christ that they receive their ministry; and to him they are quickly to render a strict account of it. May they all therefore take heed to it! May they be sensible of the importance of the trust, and, through grace, be faithful in it; that they may give up their account with the joy of that steward, who, having approved his fidelity on earth, shall receive his reward in heaven. Amen!

REFLECTIONS.—1st. As to the duty of *masters*. Give unto your servants that which is just and equal, not treating them tyrannically, nor laying on them unreasonable burdens, but using them kindly, giving them proper provisions, paying them their wages punctually, according to agreement, and as much as they really deserve, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven, to whom you are responsible, and who regardeth the persons of the rich no more than the poor.

2dly, The Apostle, having laid down the particular duties of each station, proceeds to those that more generally belong to all the members of Christ's church. He exhorts them,

1. To unceasing prayer. *Continue in prayer daily, at stated seasons, and habitually in your mind looking up*

to God; and watch in the same with thanksgiving, engaged in the service with warm affections and intenseness of mind, blessing and praising God for his goodness continually; *withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance*, and give us both opportunity and ability to speak the mystery of Christ, his rich, free, and boundless grace, revealed to Gentiles as well as Jews, for maintaining which I am also now in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak, plainly and without reserve, maintaining the equality of the Gentiles respecting all the privileges of the gospel, and keeping back nothing of all the counsel of God, as becomes a faithful ambassador of Christ. *Note*; ministers need their people's prayers, and should be constantly remembered by them in the view of their arduous work.

2. To a becoming behaviour towards those who are as yet out of the pale of the visible church. *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without*, with all prudence and circumspection, giving them no just occasion of offence, guarding against all fellowship with them in what is evil, while ready to every good word and work to do them service; *redeeming the time*, desiring to improve every opportunity of converse with them for their benefit, doing good to your very enemies, and employing your whole life as usefully as you can.

3. *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt*, edifying, discreet, and savoury, the proof of true grace in your own hearts, and the means of communicating it to others; *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man*, whether the serious inquiries of those who desire instruction, the doubts of the scrupulous, or the cavils of adversaries.

3dly, The Apostle closes his Epistle with the commendation and respectful mention of several of his brethren, who joined in salutations with him.

1. *Tychicus*. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, the bearer of this Epistle, who will give you a faithful account of my affairs, sufferings, and success; and is a beloved brother in the gospel, and a faithful minister, proved by long experience, and fellow-servant with me in the Lord, to promote the interests of his cause and kingdom: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and bring me word how you prosper, and comfort your hearts under all your trials and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

2. *Onesimus*. With Onesimus, Tychicus's companion, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, and now far different from the man who formerly fled his master's service (See the Epistle to Philemon). They shall make known unto you all things which are done here, for your comfort and encouragement, who cannot but rejoice to hear what supports I receive, and what a blessing is on my bonds.

3. *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)*. It appears hereby, that though Mark was once under the Apostle's displeasure, he was now restored to his good graces; and, having acknowledged his fault, had been heartily forgiven, and cordially received again: *And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision; these only of the Jewish brethren, are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me under my sufferings.*

4. *Epaphras,*

4. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ in the gospel, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, as in an agony wrestling with God for a blessing upon your souls, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, enlightened with the clearest discoveries of divine truth, and steadfast in the experience and practice of all holiness. For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.* Probably this faithful servant of Jesus had been chiefly instrumental in planting these churches, and therefore bore them a very particular affection. *Note*; (1.) Those whom we have begotten in the gospel, we should not fail earnestly to commend to God's keeping and care; zeal for them will make our prayers importunate. (2.) Every true believer, who is not losing ground in the divine life, is at least going on to perfection:—if he at present fall short of the mark, he is ardently pressing after it with all the powers of his soul.

5. *Luke, the beloved physician, by profession a physician for the body, but who now dispenses in the gospel healing for the soul, and Demas greet you, wishing you the richest mercies of our God.*

6. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.* Probably there the faithful assembled for their stated worship; or his family, remarkable for their regularity, exemplariness, and daily

worship of God, appeared a little church within themselves. *And when this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* (See the analysis and critical notes.) *Note*; Religious letters are often singularly useful.

7. *And say to Archippus, who had need to be peculiarly watchful over the flock, when seducers so abounded, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it with all zeal and fidelity, maintaining the doctrines of grace against all opposers, and adorning them in his conversation, building up the souls committed to his care in the true faith of the gospel, labouring earnestly for the edification of the saints, and for the conversion of sinners.* *Note*; They who are put in trust with the ministry, have a peculiarly important charge committed to them; and, if they grow cold or careless, their people may and ought, with becoming respect, to admonish them of their negligence.

8. He concludes with his benediction and subscription. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul, the mark of his genuine Epistles. Remember my bonds, which I now suffer for the sake of the Gentiles, and which should especially engage your prayers for me, and your affection towards me. Grace be with you; may the rich favour of God, with all its blessed consequences, be your present and everlasting portion. Amen* *.

* See Lardner, Michaelis, Locke, Peirce, Doddridge, Franck, Clarke, Grotius, Mill, Wetstein, Wolfius, Whitby, Philo, Hammond, Blackwall, Sherlock, Scott, Wallis, Tillotson, Beza, Heylin, Pyle, Burnet, Bengelius, Davenant, Stockius, Knatchbull, Wake, and Chrysostom.

THE FIRST EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

P R E F A C E.

ST. Paul having received an immediate order from Heaven, as St. Luke observes, *Acts*, xvi. 9. to go and preach the gospel in Macedonia, he went immediately to Philippi, which was the first city in his way, upon entering Macedonia; and thence he passed on to Thessalonica, which was the capital, *ch. xvii. 1.* But soon after he had arrived there, in company with Silas and Timotheus, having gained to the Lord in the synagogue a great number of Greek converts, and many noble women, the Jews raised such a violent outcry against him, that he was forced to leave the city to save his life, according to the direction of our Lord, When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another. The Apostle went therefore from Thessalonica to Berea, whence, being again driven by persecution, he retired to Athens. Silas and Timotheus, however, by his order, returned to Thessalonica to comfort the faithful and strengthen them in the faith; as St. Luke clearly enough expresses it in the 17th chapter of the *Acts*, and as the Apostle tells us in the 3d chapter of this Epistle. He waited for some time at Athens; but, wearied of remaining in a place which was the very seat and centre of idolatry, he went to Corinth, where Silas and Timotheus soon after joined him. The report which they brought him of the firmness and constancy of the Thessalonians filled him with extreme joy, as he tells them in this Epistle, *ch. iii. 6, &c.* which is a clear and certain proof, that it was not from Athens, as erroneously added to the conclusion of the Epistle, but from Corinth, that it was written; since St. Paul mentions the return of Timotheus, and since it was at Corinth, and not at Athens, that this disciple rejoined his Master, *Acts*, xviii. 5. St. Paul's chief design in this Epistle, was to strengthen the Thessalonians in the profession of the gospel, amid the persecutions which they endured, and to teach them to sanctify their sufferings by the practice of the Christian graces and virtues. He consoles them, in particular, for the death of their relations, and especially for the loss of those whom persecution may have snatched from them, by hope of the glory with which the Lord Jesus will crown the zeal and fidelity of the saints, at his latter coming. Having added several important exhortations, he concludes his Epistle by forcibly recommending them to read it openly to all the believers; for the scripture is a treasure that we must envy no one, conceal from no one, being a source of life for the sheep as well as for the pastors.

C H A P. I.

The Thessalonians are given to understand, both how mindful of them St. Paul was, at all times, in thanksgiving and prayer, and also how well he was persuaded of the truth and sincerity of their faith and conversion to God.

[Anno Domini 52.]

PAUL^a, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the^b Thessalonians

^a Acts, ix. xiii—xxviii. & 13. 6. & 15. 22, 23, 40. 2 Cor. 1. 9. 2 Thes. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 12. Acts, 16. 1—3. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. ^b Acts, 17. 1—10. Phil. 4. 15, 16. 2 Tim. 4. 10. ^c Gal. 1. 22. 1 John, 1. 3. John, 14. 23. & 17. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Thes. 1. 2. ^d Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. 2 Thes. 1. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. Numb. 6. 24—26. ^e See Rom. 1. 8—10. 1 Cor. 1. 4—8. Eph. 1. 15, 16. Phil. 1. 3—11. Col. 1. 3—6. 2 Thes. 1. 3, 4. ^f Acts, 17. 7, 10. Ch. 2. 13, 14. & 3. 6. & 4. 9. 2 Thes. 1. 3, 4. John, 6. 27, 29. Gal. 5. 6. Jam. 2. 17. Heb. 6. 10, 12. Rom. 15. 6. & 8. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Jam. 1. 3; 4. 2 Pet. 1. 6. Rev. 1. 9. & 2. 2, 3.

which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and pa-

C H A P. I.

THE Apostle's design in this Epistle being to furnish the Thessalonian brethren with proofs of the divine original of the gospel, both for establishing themselves, and for convincing unbelievers, he elegantly introduced his subject, by declaring that he gave thanks to God *at all times* or *daily* for their *faith, and love, and perseverance of hope*, knowing, he adds, *their election of God*, for the enjoyment of all the high privileges of the gospel, although they did not obey the law of Moses, ver. 2, 3, 4.—Then, to make the Thessalonians sensible that their faith in the gospel was well founded, he put them in mind of the arguments by which they had been induced to receive the gospel as the word of God.

The *first argument* which he mentions is, that the gospel had been offered to the Thessalonians, *not in word, or preaching only, but in preaching accompanied with great and evident miracles, performed in their presence; and with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, communicated to them after they believed.* And these miracles and supernatural gifts, he affirms, had, through Divine grace, wrought in them *much assurance*, that is, the strongest persuasion of the truth of the gospel; in which persuasion they were confirmed, by the holy disinterested behaviour of the preachers of the gospel, ver. 5.—But this being a branch of his second argument, the Apostle only mentions it here, referring the more full consideration of it to chap. ii.—He adds, that the Thessalonians had shewed the strength of their faith by imitating the apostles and the Lord Jesus, in suffering much affliction for the gospel, with joy, ver. 6.—so that they were patterns of faith and fortitude to all the brethren in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, ver. 7.—Farther, he affirms, *that from them the fame of the gospel had resounded, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, their faith in one God only was spoken of as a thing very extraordinary,* ver. 8.—that their fellow-citizens, who had carried the news of their having changed their religion, into distant countries, had told, at the same time, in what manner the preachers of the new religion had entered and established themselves among the Thessalonians; that they had done it by great and evident miracles; and that the Thessalonians, struck with these miracles, had, through grace, turned from idols, and were become the worshippers of *the living and true God*, ver. 9.—and looked for the return of his eternal Son from heaven, who, as the preachers

of the gospel affirmed, had been raised from the dead, even Jesus, who would deliver them from the wrath which is to come on idolaters and unbelievers, at the day of judgment, ver. 10.—Now, that the Thessalonians looked for the return of Jesus from heaven, and that his heavenly Father had raised him from the dead, and that they expected, at his return, to be delivered by him from the wrath to come on unbelievers, are all fitly mentioned in this place; because their expectation of these things shews what a strong impression the miracles wrought in confirmation of the gospel, had, through grace, made on the minds of the Thessalonians. Moreover, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, being a demonstration of his character as the Son of God, and of his power and authority as judge of the world, it is an undeniable proof of the divine original of the gospel, and renders the rejection of it infinitely dangerous.

Here then is the first argument, by which the gospel is proved to be a revelation from God. The apostles and evangelists wrought miracles, to shew that they were actually sent of God to publish those great discoveries, to which they have given the name of *το εὐαγγέλιον, the gospel, or good news* from God.—Now, on this argument I observe, that the efficacy of miracles to prove a divine commission, when wrought expressly for the purpose, is so plain, that little reasoning is needed to shew it. Persons of ordinary understandings, equally with those whose minds are more improved, will, if not determinately opposed to all the operations of divine love, reason as Nicodemus did, John, iii. 2. *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.* Wherefore, this being a dictate of common sense, the Apostle had no occasion to shew, in the way of close argument, that a teacher who works miracles in confirmation of his doctrine, is commissioned of God. All he had to do, was to make it evident, that his own preaching at Thessalonica had been accompanied with undeniable miracles. To the Thessalonians, however, this was not necessary. They had been eye-witnesses of his miracles, and many, through the power of divine grace accompanying them, had been converted by them: and, after their conversion, they had received from the Apostle the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and, among the rest, the power of working miracles, and of speaking foreign languages: which power, such of them as possessed it, had no doubt often exercised. Nevertheless, to convince those who should live in after ages, that

tience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father ;

4 ^b Knowing, brethren * beloved, your election of God.

^a Gen. 5. 24. & 17. 1. Pl. 16. 8. 2 Cor. 2. 17. 1 Pet. 3. 4. ^b Ch. 2. 13. Ver. 5. 9, 10. 2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Col. 3. 12. Eph. 1. 3—11. Rom. 8. 28—30. & 9. 6—23. & 11. 2—7. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10, 15—17. * Or beloved of God, your election.

the first preaching of the gospel was accompanied with great and evident miracles, the Apostle has, in this epistle, taken the very best method that could be devised; a method which carries absolute conviction with it. St. Paul, and his fellow-labourers who were united with him in this Epistle, spake plainly to the Thessalonians in this letter concerning the miracles which they wrought in their presence, and the spiritual gifts which they conferred upon them; and affirmed before them all, that these miracles and gifts, accompanied by the grace of God, produced in them the fullest assurance of the divine original of the gospel; and that the Thessalonians shewed the strength of their persuasion, by forsaking the established idolatry, and suffering, with joy, much affliction for the gospel. They farther affirmed, that the miracles which they wrought among them were so public, and so well known, that, when the unbelieving inhabitants of their city went with their merchandize to foreign countries, they not only reported that the Thessalonians had forsaken the worship of the gods, but that they had been persuaded to do so by the miracles which the preachers of the new religion had wrought in their presence, and by the extraordinary faculties which these preachers conferred on their disciples. Now who does not see that open appeals of this kind, made to the Thessalonians concerning the miracles which were wrought in their presence, and concerning the impression which these miracles, through grace, made on their minds, and the change produced in their religious sentiments through the influence of that impression, are undeniable proofs that miracles were really wrought at Thessalonica, and spiritual gifts conferred; and that, by the means of these miracles and gifts, the Thessalonians were turned from worshipping idols, to serve the living and true God. For three persons in their right senses, as Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy undoubtedly were, cannot be supposed to have made open appeals of this nature to such numerous societies as the church of the Thessalonians, and the other churches in which this Epistle was to be read, where every individual must have known whether the matters affirmed were true or false, unless they had been conscious to themselves that they were all strictly true. As little can it be supposed that the Thessalonians and the rest would have received and perused, without the utmost disapprobation, the letter in which these things are affirmed, unless they had known them to be all strictly true. Wherefore, that great and evident miracles were wrought at Thessalonica; that spiritual gifts were conferred on those who believed; and that these miracles and spiritual gifts were means, through grace, of producing among the Thessalonians such a firm persuasion of the truth of the new religion, that many of them forsook their idol gods, embraced the gospel, and worshipped the one true God only; and that this change of religion brought upon them much affliction;—are all as certain as that the Thessalonians embraced

the gospel, and that this Epistle was written by St. Paul, and sent to Thessalonica.

THESSALONIANS] Thessalonica was in St. Paul's time the capital of Macedonia; St. Paul had preached the gospel there in the year 51. Acts, xvii. Some few among the Jews received the gospel; but a great multitude of the devout Gentiles became converts to Christ. Hence the majority of the church consisted of native heathens, who had formerly been idolaters. The Jews, ever jealous of the admission of the Gentiles to the same privileges with themselves, raised such a disturbance, that St. Paul and Silvanus were obliged suddenly to withdraw. They even pursued him to Berea: he left Silvanus and Timothy there, and went to Athens, ordering them to follow him. Timothy did not long continue at Athens with St. Paul, but was sent back to Thessalonica; and when he returned, found St. Paul at Corinth, where he resided a year and a half; and in the former part of that time this Epistle was probably written; that is, about the year 52.

Ver. 2. From this verse to the end of the third chapter we have the chief business of this Epistle; which was to comfort, strengthen, and establish the Christians at Thessalonica, and to persuade them to persevere under all the discouragements which he, their Apostle, or they themselves, might meet with. In his entrance upon this design, he gives vent to what lay most upon his heart, thanking God for their genuine conversion from idolatry to Christianity, amid so many discouraging circumstances, and begging of God that they might persevere; in which he takes all occasions of speaking well of the Thessalonians, as indeed he does in the general through all this Epistle.

Ver. 3. *Your work of faith, &c.*] Some translate it, *Your faithful work, and loving labour, and patient hope.* Others join the last clause with the first words of the verse, *Without ceasing remembering in the sight, &c.* but I prefer the sense which arises from the order of the words in the original; *in the sight of God even our Father, who beholds them with pleasure.*

Ver. 4, 5. *Knowing, brethren beloved, &c.*] This Epistle being, as we have observed, directed principally to converted Gentiles, who were once idolaters, the design of these verses is very evident, if we reflect upon the great controversy of that time, concerning the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church, without submitting to any part of the law of Moses: in which view the verses may be thus paraphrased: "as I have had a full and undoubted revelation immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, of God's purpose to receive you, idolatrous Gentiles, into his visible church, and all true believers among you, as his people, under the Christian dispensation; I own you as dearly beloved brethren, and have with pleasure seen this purpose of God take effect; in that our gospel, when it first appeared among you, was not an empty sound, but was attended with the plainness

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord; having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you sounded out the word

of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

¹ 2 Cor. 10. 4, c. 1 Cor. 1. 24. & 2. 2-4. & 4. 20. 2 Cor. 6. 6. Gal. 3. 2, 5. Col. 2. 2. Ch. 2. 1, 17. Heb. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 3-7. ² Ch. 2. 1-11. 2 Thes. 3. 8, 9. Acts, 20. 18-35. 1 Cor. 2. 2-5. & 4. 9-13. 2 Cor. 7. 12. & 2. 14, 17. & 3. 12. & 4. 1, 2 & 6. 3-10. 1 Tim. 4. 12-16. 2 Tim. 3. 10. 1 Cor. 9. 19-22. 2 Cor. 12. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 10. ³ 1 Cor. 11. 1. & 4. 16. Phil. 3. 17. 2 Thes. 3. 9. ⁴ Ver. 9. Ch. 2. 13, 14. & 3. 3. 2 Thes. 1. 4, 5. Acts, 17. 5. & 5. 41. Heb. 10. 34. Hof. 2. 14. ⁵ 2 Cor. 9. 2. 1 Tim. 4. 12. ⁶ Rom. 10. 18. 2 Thes. 3. 1. 1f. 2. 3. & 11. 9. & 52. 7. 15. & 65. 19, 20. ⁷ Ch. 4. 10. 2 Thes. 1. 4. Rom. 1. 18. ⁸ Ver. 5, 6. Ch. 2. 1, 17. ⁹ Acts, 14. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 2. Gal. 4. 8. 1f. 2. 3, 18-20. & xxxv. xliii. xlix. liv. lx. ¹⁰ Mark, 15. 43. Luke. 2. 25. 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Thes. 3. 5. & 1. 7. Acts, 1. 7. & 3. 21. Phil. 3. 20. Rev. 1. 7. Heb. 9. 28. Tit. 2. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 8. 2 Pet. 3. 12, 14. Ch. 4. 16. ¹¹ Acts, 2. 24. Rom. 4. 25. 1 Pet. 1. 21. 1 Cor. xv. ¹² Mat. 1. 21. Rom. 5. 9, 10. 2 Thes. 1. 10, 11. Rev. 5. 9. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. Gal. 3. 13. Ch. 5. 9. 1f. 45. 17, 22-25.

“plainness and energy of truth; and had also the attestation of miracles, as well as plenty of spiritual gifts.”

Ver. 7. *So that ye were ensamples*] *τύπας, types*; that is, plans, models, or patterns; and, by a metaphor, it is used for an example, or moral pattern. *Philippi* and *Berea* were in *Macedonia*; *Athens* and *Corinth* were in *Achaia*. The Apostle mentions these parts, as he had just been travelling through them, before he came to Corinth.

Ver. 8. *For from you sounded out the word*] It was accounted a great honour for any church, or city, to have the gospel go out from thence. Grotius observes, that many of the Thessalonians were merchants, who travelled through all Greece; and therefore so strange and blessed a piece of news might easily spread through Macedonia and Achaia, as one was so nigh them, and the other had such commerce with them.

Ver. 9. *For they themselves shew of us*] “For even our enemies, as well as the Christians, can tell, and do speak of it, not without wonder and astonishment, what uncommon gifts we ourselves had, and communicated unto you, and what a hearty reception we met with on our first arrival.”

Ver. 10. *Which delivered us*] *Who delivered us*—*Dog-bridge*.

Inferences.—What an infinite mercy it is, when the gospel comes to any of our souls, not in words only, but with the impressing power of the Holy Ghost! This is an evident proof of the favour of God, and of our interest in Christ, which can only be known by its fruits; such as the witness of the Spirit of God, faith, love, and patience under sufferings for Christ’s sake; a thorough conversion in heart and life from every idol to the living and true God; a holy imitation of Christ, and of his servants, as far as they follow him; and a hopeful expectation of his glorious coming to deliver us from all our

troubles. And how desirable is it to have tokens of God’s love, and of the power of his grace, in an eminent degree! Such receive his word with full assurance of its divine truth, excellence, and importance, and, with joy in the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding all the tribulations which may befall them for its sake; they are a credit to the gospel, and noble examples to other believers; and are spoken of with admiration and joy to all that hear of them, and love the truth as it is in Jesus. With what pleasure do his ministering servants own one another, and reflect on every remarkable success of their labours, and on a testimony in the consciences of their hearers, that the power of the Spirit is with them! They affectionately salute the dear converts; they abound in thankfulness for them, and continually recommend them in their prayers to the grace and blessing of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every remembrance of them. And, O how animating to every true believer is the thought of the eternal Son of God, as the risen Jesus, who, having saved them from their sins, will deliver them, if faithful unto death, from the wrath to come.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The Apostle begins with his usual address, joining two of his brethren with himself. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ*, called to the worship of the true God, in and through Christ Jesus, and united to him by faith, as living members of his body: *grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*; may all the blessings of the gospel covenant be your portion, partaking of the boundless grace of God, and enjoying that sweetest peace of conscience which results from a sense of his pardoning and sanctifying love!

2dly, With thanksgiving and prayer the Apostle, on their behalf, approached a throne of grace. *We give thanks*

C H A P . II .

He sets forth in what manner the gospel was brought and preached to the Thessalonians, and how they received it. A reason is given both why St. Paul was so long absent from them, and why he was so desirous to see them.

[Anno Domini 52.]

FOR yourselves, brethren, know ^a our entrance in unto you, that it was not in

vain :

2 ^b But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we ^c were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

3 ^d For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile :

^a See ch. 1. 3—10. Ver. 13. ^b 2 Thes. 3. 1. ^c 2 Tim. 3. 11. Acts, 16. 21—24, 37. ^d 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Acts, 17. 2—10. Phil. 1. 30. Col. 2. 1. & 1. 24, 28, 29. Ch. 3. 3, 7. Eph. 6. 19. ^e 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 2, 5. & 7. 2. & 11. 13. 2 Pet. 1. 16.

to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers :

1. Remembering, without ceasing, (1.) your work of faith, which is proved to be unfeigned, by the blessed effects it has produced on your hearts and lives: And, (2.) Your labour of love, love to Jesus and one another engaging you to every good word and work, and making you willing to submit to any hardships for his glory and the advantage of your brethren: And also, (3.) your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, even that lively hope which faith in him inspires, and which strengthens you with patient courage to endure under every cross, in the sight of God and our Father, to whom we can appeal for our constant and thankful remembrance of you, and trust that you approve yourselves to him in all fidelity: knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God, that you have been called from Gentilism to be partakers of all the blessings and privileges of the gospel, to be the children of God, and heirs of the eternal inheritance, which he will certainly bestow upon you, if faithful unto death.

2. He thanks God for the success of his preaching among them. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, to your ears, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, who bore his attestation to the truth by miracles, accompanied it with divine evidence to the conscience, and caused it to enter into your penitent and believing hearts, in much assurance of your interest in the promised blessings; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake, with what patience and perseverance, in the midst of much persecution, we delivered our message, zealous for your souls; and how God was pleased graciously to own our labours. Note; Nothing fills a faithful minister's heart with deeper gratitude than the beholding the success of his labours.

3dly, The Apostle describes the happy effects which the gospel had produced among them.

1. Ye became followers of us in faith, patience, and sufferings, and of the Lord Jesus, the perfect pattern which we desire to imitate; having received the word in much affliction: far from being stumbled at the persecution which was raised against us, or being discouraged, ye were filled with joy of the Holy Ghost; and, as your tribulations abounded, your consolation by Jesus Christ abounded also.

2. You were eminently distinguished by your conduct on that occasion, so that ye were ensamples of courage, con-

stancy, and zeal, to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia; for from you sounded out the word of the Lord, the fame of your faith and the remarkable success of the gospel among you went forth; not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, your faith to Godward is spread abroad, and much spoken of, so that we need not to speak any thing in your commendation: for they themselves, among whom this good report of you is spread, shew of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you; and need not our information, having been already made acquainted with all the circumstances; and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, who alone hath life in himself, and is the author thereof to all his creatures, and besides whom there is no God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, in faith and hope, whom he raised from the dead for our justification, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come; and but for him we must all have perished eternally. Note; (1.) Good examples are mightily influential. (2.) Wherever the true grace of God comes, it will turn the heart from all its sinful pursuits, and from idols, to cleave to him in faith and love alone. (3.) We owe it to the Son of God that we are rescued from everlasting burnings. Had he not interposed on our behalf, our estate had been as desperate as that of the devils themselves. (4.) They who are partakers of the gospel salvation constantly keep in mind the second coming of the Lord, waiting with desire his appearing, and making it their labour and prayer to be ready to meet him in the clouds.

C H A P . II .

IN this chapter the Apostle proposes his second argument in proof of the truth of the gospel. It is taken from the character, the behaviour, and the views of the persons who first preached it. Now, the importance of this argument will appear, if we consider what the things were which the preachers of the gospel published, and required mankind to believe. They told every where, that Jesus, their master, is the son of God; that he wrought many miracles in Judea; that he was crucified by the Jews, his countrymen, as a deceiver; but that God declared him, with power, to be his son, by raising him from the dead, agreeably to what our Lord, before his death, had foretold; that after his resurrection, having spent some time on earth among his disciples, he ascended into heaven, while they looked on; and that two angels, who were present on the occasion, assured them, that

4 But, ' as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak ; not as pleasing men, but God, ' which trieth our hearts.

* Gal. 2. 7. Eph. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 3. 11, 12. Tit. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 2. & 9. 17. Gal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5, 13. 2 Cor. 4. 1, 2. & 5. 11, 20. ' See Jer. 17. 10. Rev. 2. 23.

that in like manner as they had seen Jesus go into heaven, so he would return.

But to induce mankind to believe matters so extraordinary, it was necessary that the persons who called themselves eye-witnesses of them, and who reported them to the world, should be men of sound judgment and known integrity, and free from all interested views; that they should be fully persuaded themselves of the truth of the things which they told; that they should use no guile nor flattery to procure themselves credit; and that, by their whole deportment, they should shew themselves to be pious and virtuous persons, whose only aim, in this undertaking, was to promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Wherefore, although the Apostle and his assistants had said, in a general way, chap. i. 5, *You know what manner of men we were among you, for your sake*, they judged it necessary to employ the greatest part of this chapter, in setting forth distinctly the facts and circumstances by which their sincerity, their integrity, and their disinterestedness in preaching the gospel, were evinced; together with those particulars by which their moral character was raised above all suspicion. Being in every respect, therefore, such men as missionaries from God ought to be, the evidences of the gospel, so far as they depend on human testimony, derive great lustre from the character and behaviour of its first preachers.

His illustration of these topics, the Apostle begins with shewing, that he and his assistants were fully persuaded of the truth of all the matters which they preached. For he told the Thessalonians, that *their entrance among them was not false*. They did not come with a feigned story in their mouth, which they themselves did not believe, ver. 1.—Their persuasion of the things which they preached, they shewed at their entrance among the Thessalonians, by the persecution which they suffered, and were suffering for the gospel. Say they, *Although we had before suffered, and were shamefully handled at Philippi, (they had been scourged, and laid in the stocks,) as ye know, we were bold through God to speak to you the gospel of God, amidst a great combat; that is, amidst a new and heavy persecution, raised against us in your city by the unbelieving Jews, ver. 2.* Their preaching of the gospel under persecution is fitly mentioned by the Apostle as a proof of their firm persuasion of the things which they preached; because impostors having nothing in view by their fictions but to acquire fame, or power, or riches, or pleasures, they seldom endure a long continued course of heavy sufferings in propagating these fictions; far less do they expose themselves to death for maintaining them. Next, the Apostle affirms, that *their exhortation, or gospel, did not proceed from error; that is, from an erroneous opinion, rashly taken up, without any foundation; nor from those impure worldly motives, which influence impostors: neither did they use any guile in contriving or*

in gaining credit to the gospel which they preached, ver. 3.

But the freedom of the apostles, and other ministers of the word, from error, impurity, and guile, being circumstances which rendered their testimony credible in the highest degree, it was improper to speak of these things at more length. And therefore, beginning with their freedom from *guile*, the Apostle observes, that, as persons *commissioned of God to preach the gospel*, they delivered its doctrines and precepts exactly as they received them from God; at no time preaching *so as to please men, but God, who knew their hearts*. And this they did, notwithstanding they were sensible that the doctrines of the gospel, as they delivered them, would be reckoned by the Greeks foolishness; and that its precepts would be condemned as unreasonable severities, because they were contrary to the maxims and practices of the world, ver. 4. Who does not see, that if the Christian preachers had been impostors, they never would have framed a gospel, or scheme of religion, of this kind?—And as the Christian preachers used no guile in framing their *exhortation, or gospel*, so they used none of the base arts practised by impostors for procuring credit to it. They never accosted any person with *fawning flattering speeches*, to win his affections; neither did they make hypocritical pretensions to piety, *as a cloak to cover covetous designs*. From these well-known arts of impostors, St. Paul and his assistants were entirely free; as the Thessalonians, who were thoroughly acquainted with their manner of preaching, well knew, ver. 5.—Next, with respect to *impurity*, the Apostle and his assistants were not influenced by any of those corrupt motives which actuate impostors. Instead of seeking to make ourselves powerful, or rich, by the gospel, *we never demanded the honour of obedience, nor of maintenance, either from you, or from others; although we could have been burdensome to you, in both these respects, as the apostles of Christ, ver. 6.*—The truth is, as apostles, they had authority from their Master to enjoin their disciples what was fit (Philemon, ver. 8.); and on that pretext, if their ruling passion had been the love of power, they might have exercised an absolute dominion over their disciples, as false teachers never fail to do. They had also a right to be maintained by those to whom they preached, and, on that score, if they had loved money, they might have enriched themselves at their expence, after the example of all false teachers, 2 Pet. ii. 3.—But so far were the ministers of the gospel from behaving among their disciples at Thessalonica in an imperious, insolent manner; that *they were gentle among them, as a nurse towards her own sucking children, ver. 7.* (See Acts, xx. 29.)—*and took a most affectionate care of them; and were well pleased to impart to them, not only the gospel of God, but also their own lives; which in fact they hazarded, by preaching it to them: and all this from no motive but because the Thessalonians were*

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covet-

ousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of

1 Act. 20. 33. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 2. & 7. 2. & 12. 17. Mat. 23. 14. Rom. 16. 18. 2 Pet. 2. 3. 1f. 30. 10. Jer. 6. 13, 14. Ezek. 13. 10, 19.
 Rom. 1. 9. & 9. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 18. & 11. 31. Gal. 1. 20. Phil. 1. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 21. 2 Tim. 4. 1. John, 5. 41, 44. & 12. 43. Gal. 5. 26.

were become dear to them; on account of their love of truth, ver. 8.—And, with respect to maintenance, they put the Thessalonians in mind that, instead of demanding any thing from them on that account, they wrought night and day, that none of the Thessalonians might be burdened, while they preached to them the gospel of God, ver. 9.—These facts, well known to the Thessalonians, were there no other, are undeniable proofs of the sincerity, honesty, and disinterestedness of the first preachers of the gospel; and, if such arguments were necessary, would add no small degree of credibility to the things which they have testified concerning their Master.—Lastly, with respect to error: to shew that in believing the gospel the Apostle and his associates were not prejudiced by the influence of vicious inclinations, they appealed to the sober, holy, and virtuous manner of living, which they all along followed among their disciples, and especially among the Thessalonians. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we lived among you who believe,* ver. 10. This is not the manner of life which false teachers, who are seduced by corruption of heart, follow among their disciples. Such never fail to make themselves known, by some vicious practice which cleaves to them, and which they justify by their erroneous principles. See 2 Pet. ii. 18. Jude, 4.—Farther, to shew that they were not blind antinomians, St. Paul and his assistants called on the Thessalonians to bear witness to the earnestness with which they exhorted every one of them, *even as a father his children,* to follow all the branches of holiness, ver. 11.—And how they solemnly testified that they should walk worthy of the true God, whom they now worshipped; and suitably to the nature of that glorious dispensation into which he had called them, ver. 12. Appeals of this kind, made by the preachers of the gospel to their own disciples, concerning the manner in which they lived among them, and concerning the instructions and exhortations which they gave them, are incontestable proofs, both of the soundness of their understanding, and the purity of their heart. Wherefore, no reasonable person can suspect that they were influenced, either through weakness or vice, to receive a scheme of error, held out to them by their Master, without any evidence to support it. To be the more convinced of this, we need only compare with them the first disciples of such impostors as have deluded the world, whose credulity may easily be traced in the weakness of their understandings, or in the viciousness of their lives. Upon the whole, as the first preachers of the gospel are distinguished from impostors in general by the qualities above mentioned; so, by the same qualities they were distinguished from the Greek philosophers in particular; who, though they spake admirably concerning the moral virtues, yet, in general, followed the most dissolute courses in private, and, in teaching, had no regard to any thing,

but to the hire which they received for their instructions.

The Apostle and his assistants having, in this and the preceding chapter, proved the divine original of the gospel, by the miracles which they wrought in the presence of the Thessalonians; by the miraculous gifts which they conferred on them who believed; by the disinterestedness which they shewed in preaching the gospel, and by the holiness of their lives,—the more fully to convince after ages that what they have written concerning these things was strictly true, they tell us, *they gave thanks to God without ceasing, because, when the Thessalonians received the preached word of God from them, they knew that they embraced not the word of men; but, as it is in truth, the word of God; which also wrought effectually in them who believed, such an attachment to Christ, and such fortitude, as enabled them to suffer for the gospel,* ver. 13.—By thus ending the arguments taken from the miracles, the character, the views, and the behaviour of the first preachers of the gospel, with a solemn thanksgiving to God for the faith and sufferings of the Thessalonians, the Apostle not only told them plainly that their faith was, through the divine grace, established on their own knowledge of the things he had written, but he appealed to God for the truth of them. There cannot, therefore, be the least doubt that St. Paul and his coadjutors were the sincere, sober, holy, disinterested, meek persons that he has represented them to be; and that their irreproachable behaviour added great weight to their testimony concerning their Divine Master.

Before the Apostle proceeded to his third argument, he answered certain objections, which, it is probable, were much insisted on by the learned Greeks for discrediting the gospel. And, because these objections were levelled against the miracles and character of the Christian preachers, they are introduced with great propriety, after finishing the arguments drawn from these topics.

Objection 1. The Apostle, after thanking God that the behaviour of the preachers of the gospel, as well as their miracles, had induced the Thessalonians, through grace, to receive their word as the word of God, proceeds to observe, that they shewed the strength of their faith, by *becoming imitators of the churches of God which, in Judea, are in Christ Jesus; having suffered the same things from their own countrymen, as the others did of the Jews,* ver. 14.—This manner of expressing the sufferings of the Thessalonians for the gospel, the Apostle adopted, because it gave him an opportunity of answering a very plausible objection, which the philosophers raised against the gospel, from the unbelief of the Jews in Judea. Said they, the Christian preachers build the gospel upon the Jewish revelation, and tell us, that their matter gave himself out in Judea, as the great personage foretold by the Jewish prophets; and that, in confirmation

of

you, nor yet of others, when * we might have
* been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were ¹gentle among you, even
as a nurse cherisheth her children :

8 So, ²being affectionately desirous of
you, we were willing to have imparted unto
you, not the gospel of God only, but also our
own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

¹ 2 Cor. 2. 10, 11. Philem. 8, 9. Ver. 9. ¹ Cor. 9. 7, 8, 6, 14. 2 Thes. 3. 8, 9. Ver. 9. * *Or used authority.* ¹ 1 Cor. 2. 3. & 9. 1—22.
² 2 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 10, 11. & 13. 4. 2 Thes. 3. 9. 3 Tim. 2. 10, 24, 25. ² Rom. 1. 11. 2 Cor. 12. 14, 15. Gal. 4. 19. Col. 1. 28. & 4. 12.
Heb. 13. 17.

of his pretensions, he wrought many miracles in different parts of the country. But the rejection of the gospel by the Jews, their putting Jesus to death, and their persecuting his disciples, are strong presumptions, or rather clear proofs, that the gospel is inconsistent with the Jewish revelation, and that the Jews did not believe the miracles which Jesus pretended to perform, but considered him as an impostor, and his miracles as feats of magic. This objection, it is true, the Apostle has not stated; but, seeing that what follows is a direct answer to it, and comes immediately after the Thessalonians are said to have suffered like things from their own countrymen, as the churches of God in Judea had suffered from the Jews, we cannot avoid supposing, that when he says of the Jews, *Who have both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have greatly persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, &c.* he intended to remove any suspicion that might arise to the prejudice of the gospel, from the unbelief of the Jews, their crucifying the Lord Jesus, and their persecuting his Apostles. For it is the same as if he had said, the Jews, indeed, have killed the Lord Jesus; but they have also killed their own prophets, notwithstanding they wrought miracles among them, and were universally acknowledged to be true prophets. The same persons have persecuted us, the apostles of Jesus, in the persuasion that they please God. *But they do not please God; for in this, as in their whole conduct, they are enemies to mankind,* ver. 15.—and in a little time God will shew his extreme displeasure with them, for crucifying his Son, and persecuting his apostles, by destroying their nation, ver. 16.—So remarkable were the Jews, in all ages, for their enmity to the messengers of God, that Stephen challenged the council to shew which of the prophets their fathers had not persecuted. This being the character of the Jews, their rejection of the gospel, their killing the Lord Jesus, and persecuting his apostles, afford not the smallest presumption, either that the gospel is inconsistent with the Jewish revelation, or that the miracles of Jesus and his apostles were false. In these things the Jews behaved as their fathers did to the prophets, who brought the former revelations from God to them; and the punishment which soon fell on them, shewed how much God was displeased with them for so doing.

Objection 2. The second objection was levelled against St. Paul and Silas in particular, being founded on their behaviour during the tumult at Thessalonica. These men, said the philosophers, though the chief preachers of the new doctrine, did not appear with Jason and his brethren before the magistrates, either to defend it, or to suffer for it. What could this be owing to, but to their consciousness that the whole was a fraud, or to their timidity? Either of which was inexcusable in mission-

aries from God, who boasted in their sufferings, as adding weight to their testimony concerning their master. Something of this sort must have been said against St. Paul and Silas; otherwise their fleeing, which was advised by the Thessalonians themselves, Acts, xvii. 10. needed no apology, at least to the Thessalonians; and far less so earnest an apology as that which the Apostle has offered in this chapter, where he assures the brethren that, when he fled to Berea, he intended to be absent *during the time of an hour*, that is, for a short time, or for a few days only, till the rage of the Jews should subside: and that accordingly, while in Berea, *he had endeavoured, with great desire, to see them,* ver. 17.—and would have come to them once and again, but Satan hindered him, by bringing the Jews from Thessalonica to Berea, where they stirred up the people against him, and forced him to flee to Athens, ver. 18.—Yet, on neither of these occasions did he flee from a consciousness of fraud, or from the fear of death; but from his wishing to have an opportunity of perfecting the faith of the Thessalonians, and of converting a greater number of the Gentiles. For he assured them that he considered them, and the rest of his Gentile converts, as his hope, and joy, and crown of glorying at the day of judgment, ver. 19.—And, to convince them that he really believed his future happiness would be increased by their perseverance, and by the conversion of the Gentiles, he repeated the same assurance, ver. 20.

Ver. 1. *Was not in vain:*—This may be rendered, *was not vain.* Dr. Heylin translates it, *was not without success.*

Ver. 2. *With much contention,*] Because of the opposition exerted against us by the perverse and unbelieving Jews. Acts, xvii. 1—9. Dr. Heylin reads, *even under great difficulties.*

Ver. 3. *For our exhortation was not of deceit,*] *For our doctrine was not erroneous, nor impure, nor such as could seduce you.*

Ver. 4. *But, as we were allowed, &c.*] *But as we have been approved of God to be intrusted, &c.*

Ver. 6. *When we might have been burdensome,*] The Apostle particularly refers to the right he had of being maintained at their charge. See ver. 9. 2 Cor. xi. 9. 1 Tim. v. 18, and 1 Cor. 9. Vittinga, however, would render it, *when we could have taken much [authority] upon us.*

Ver. 7. *But we were gentle, &c.*] “We not only gave up our own just rights, but considered you as our children, and cherished you in your infant state as a hen cherisheth her brood under her wings, or as a tender and affectionate mother nurseth her own helpless infant.” Dr. Heylin renders the verse, *We treated you with the tenderness and condescension of the nursing mother cherishing her children.*

9 For ye remember, brethren, ^a our labour and travail: for, labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 ^b Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As ye know ^c how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

12 ^d That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath ^e called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also ^f thank we God

without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which ^g effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, ^h became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

15 ⁱ Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have ^j persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

^a Acts, 18. 3. & 20. 34. 1 Cor. 4. 12. & 9. 12, 15. 2 Cor. 10. 15. & 11. 9, 12, 23. & 12. 10, 15—16. 2 Thes. 3. 8, 9. 1 Tim. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 2. 10. ^b 1 Sam. 12. 3. Acts, 20. 18, 31—35. 2 Cor. 7. 2. 2 Thes. 3. 7. 1 Tim. 4. 12. 2 Tim. 3. 10. ^c Ver. 7. 1 Cor. 4. 15. Gal. 3. 13. Gen. 18. 19. Prov. 4. 1—13. ^d Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10. Phil. 1. 27. Gen. 17. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 15. 1 Cor. 7. 24. ^e 1 Cor. 1. 9. & 7. 20. Gal. 1. 6. & 5. 8. Eph. 4. 1. Ch. 5. 24. 2 Thes. 2. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 9. ^f Heb. 3. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 9. & 5. 10. 2 Pet. 1. 3, 10. ^g See Ch. 1. 3, 5. ^h Mat. 10. 40. Gal. 4. 14. 2 Pet. 3. 2. Ch. 4. 8. ⁱ Ch. 1. 5, 10. Acts, 16. 14. 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Heb. 4. 12. Jehu, 6. 63, 68. & 15. 3. & 17. 17. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Jer. 15. 16. ^j Ch. 1. 6. Acts, 17. 5, 13. Heb. 10. 32—34. Acts, viii. xii. ^k Mat. 5. 12. & 23. 34, 37. Luke, 6. 23. & 12. 53. Acts, 2. 23, 35. & 3. 13. & 5. 30. & 7. 52. & 8. 4. & 11. 19. ^l Or chased us out.

Ver. 9. For, labouring night and day, &c.] What an instance of goodness and benevolence to mankind! to labour for bread with his own hands, while he spent his time in teaching all who would learn truths of the greatest importance,—how to live holily, die cheerfully, and be happy for ever!

Ver. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God,] How much does the Apostle insist upon holiness of heart and life in all professed Christians! He urged the converted heathens to piety, purity, and virtue, from the example of the true God, in whom they now believed, Col. i. 10. and by the great favour which was shewn them in their being received into the Christian church, Ephes. iv. 1. by that purity which the gospel in general requires, Rom. viii. 1, &c. and, more particularly, by the life and example of our Lord and Saviour; by his death and resurrection, by his ascension and authority, and by the prospect of his coming to judgment at the last day, as well as of their enjoying an endless life of holiness and happiness in his glorious kingdom. See 1 Cor. xi. 1. Heb. xii. 2, 3.

Ver. 13. But as it is in truth, the word of God,] That the doctrine was from God, and the apostles only as heralds, messengers, and ambassadors from God, to publish it among men, appears from comparing ch. i. 6. and iv. 8. Matth. x. 40. Gal. iv. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 2. Wherever it is thus esteemed, the gospel must necessarily have a great influence; where there is a thorough and full conviction that the apostles of our Lord and Saviour were employed by heaven, and that the doctrine itself is nothing less than a message from the God of strict truth, unspotted holiness, unerring wisdom, and overflowing goodness; no wonder that it should, when accompanied by divine grace, influence such as considered it in this view, readily to renounce their false religions, to lay aside their prejudices and

prepossessions, to embrace it, and live upon its principles, and to forego all temporal things whatever, on the faith of so well attested a religion, and so glorious a prospect.

Ver. 14.] Having before commended them for their ready and cheerful reception of the gospel, and hinted at their resolution in suffering for the cause, he goes on to commend them for their patience and fortitude, ver. 14—16. and then again expresses his great affection for the Thessalonians, and his earnest desire to make them another visit; which he assures them he had more than once attempted; but Satan had always hindered him: by which vehement expression he again obliquely reflects on the unbelieving Jews, ver. 17—20. St. Paul probably calls the Christian churches in Judea, churches in Christ Jesus, to distinguish them from the Jewish churches, or the synagogues in Judea, as well as to intimate that all the members of Christ's true church are one in him. As to the patience and fortitude of the Christian churches there, see Acts, xii. and Heb. x. 32—34. How these Thessalonians imitated them, see ch. i. 6. Acts, xvii. 5. &c. The Jews of Jerusalem had desired Pilate, a Gentile, to crucify our Lord; the Jews of Thessalonica had exasperated the Gentiles, and even the governors of that city, to persecute his apostle and disciples. From the representation both of the history of the Acts, and the Apostolic Epistles, as well as from other ancient writings, it appears, that most of the primitive persecutions proceeded from the malice and opposition of the unbelieving Jews.

Ver. 15. Who both killed, &c.] Who have both killed the Lord Jesus, and the, or his prophets. Mill, and Wetstein. Not only heathen authors have given the Jews the character of being an obstinate, prejudiced people, contrary to all men; but even their own prophet, Ezekiel, (ch. iii. 4—9. v. 6.) and Josephus, their own historian.

16. ^a Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, ^b to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time ^b in presence, not in heart, ^c endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but ^d Satan hindered us.

19 For what *is* ^e our hope, or joy, or crown of ^{*} rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

^a Acts, 13. 50. & 14. 5, 19. & 17. 5, 13. & 18. 12. & 19. 9. & 22. 21, 22. & 8. 12. & 11. 21—24. & 12. 45. & 21. 41—44. & 22. 7. Luke, 13. 3, 5, 9, 17, 22—37. & 19. 27, 41—45. & 21. 20—24. Heb. 6. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 8. ^b 1 Cor. 5. 3. Col. 2. 5. 2 Kings, 5. 26. ^c Ch. 3. 10. Rom. 1. 13. & 15. 22. ^d As Acts, 23. 12. or 14. 12. ^e Prov. 16. 31. Ezek. 16. 12. & 23. 42. 2 Cor. 1. 14. Phil. 2. 16. & 4. 1. ^{*} Or glorying.

Ver. 16. Forbidding us to speak] Or, *hindering us from speaking.* Their *filling up* the measure of their *sins*, was by murdering our Lord Jesus Christ, and persecuting his disciples. This most grievous sin was, in a manner, uniting all the guilt of mankind in one act of disobedience; and therefore it was to be punished with a most grievous and exemplary punishment; as if all the temporary punishments of sinners had been deferred till then, and were to have been collected, in order to fall upon their heads with the greater vengeance. The next clause might be rendered, more properly, *For perfect wrath, or complete and durable vengeance, is coming upon them.* It is true, a judicial blindness had seized them; but the remarkable destruction was approaching, prophesied of, Dan. ix. 27. Matth. xxiv. They returned from their former captivities; but *extreme vengeance*, a lasting divine judgment, has befallen them, since their crucifixion of the Lord of Life. Above 1700 years have they been dispersed among the nations, and Jerusalem is still trodden under foot of the Gentiles; and shall be so, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The destruction here referred to, was drawing nigh when the Apostle wrote this Epistle, and actually happened within twenty years after; and it may be observed, that, in consequence of this destruction, the Jews suffered the divine vengeance in various other parts of the earth; particularly under Trajan, 460,000 of them were destroyed in Egypt and Cyprus; and under Adrian 580,000.

Ver. 17. Being taken from you] The original word is very emphatical;—ἀποσφαινοσθέντες. It is an allusion to that grief, anxiety, and reluctance of heart with which dying parents take farewell of their children, when they are just going to leave them helpless *orphans*, exposed to the injuries of the world; or that sorrow of heart with which poor destitute *orphans* close the eyes of their dying parents. The Apostle, by this metaphor, in a very lively and tender manner, expresses the concern and reluctance wherewith he had parted from his young converts at Thessalonica; being violently driven away from them by the unbelieving Jews; compelled to leave these his spiritual children amid the most restless and malicious enemies, without the guidance, defence, and support of their father in the gospel. Acts, xvii. 5, 10. The original, rendered, *for a short time*, signifies literally, *for an hour's time*; which is a figurative expression. It was several years before the Apostle returned to them; but his mind

was full of the ideas of eternity, which annihilated, as it were, any period of mortal life.

Ver. 18. But Satan hindered us.] When the Hebrews would express any thing remarkably great, they add the name of *God* to it; so they call great mountains, the *mountains of God*,—and the like: and thus, when they describe the most wicked men, they call them the *ministers, servants, and children of Satan*, and sometimes *Satan* himself; because they imitate and comply with the temptations of that wicked spirit who is at the head of all apostacy from God, and the most remarkable enemy in the universe to truth and goodness. The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica, as the instruments of Satan, were the persons intended; and indeed the sense of their extreme malice seems to have dwelt strongly on the Apostle's mind during the writing of this whole Epistle.

Ver. 20. For ye are our glory and joy.] The Apostle expected to know the Thessalonians again at the day of judgment, and in the other world; and rejoiced in the hope of meeting them among the holy and glorified in that day, especially as he had been so instrumental toward their conversion. Hence we may expect to know our friends in another world; but then, all temporal consanguinity and relation shall cease, and we shall rejoice in each other there in proportion to the degrees of grace and glory, and as we have here mutually contributed to promote each other's knowledge and divine love, piety and virtue. When this animal nature, and those affections and qualities suited to this animal state and terrestrial life, shall be put off, and we shall have qualities and affections fit only for an intellectual state, we shall then see things in a different light, and our relish will be wholly spiritual; for where rational enjoyments are in their highest perfection, rational beings, who have the true taste, will value each other in an exact proportion to their purity and perfection, knowledge, love, and holiness. What a glorious motive ought this to be to us, as it was here to St. Paul, to cultivate in ourselves, and to promote in all our friends and acquaintance divine knowledge, holiness, and virtue, goodness, and heavenly love! This will leave lasting and happy effects, when all earthly relations will be over; and be a pleasurable reflection to us and them many thousand ages hence.

Inferences.—Surely it is not possible to conceive, from any thing but the example of the great Shepherd of the sheep,

C H A P. III.

St. Paul testifieth his great love to the Thessalonians; partly by sending Timothy unto them, to strengthen and comfort them; partly by rejoicing in their well-doing; and partly by praying for them, and desiring a safe coming unto them.

[Anno Domini 52.]

WHEREFORE ^a when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to

be left at Athens alone;

2 And sent ^b Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

3 ^c That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that ^d we are appointed thereunto.

^a Ver. 5. Acts, 17. 16. ^b Acts, 16. 1. & 17. 14. Rom. 16. 21. ^c 1 Cor. 16. 10. Phil. 2. 19, 25. Eph. 6. 21, 22. Col. 4. 7, 8. Acts, 14. 22. Rom. 1. 12. ^d Acts 5. 41. & 20. 24. & 21. 13. Rom. 5. 3. Col. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 1. 8. Jam. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 14. Eph. 3. 13. Job. 16. 33. Acts, 14. 22. & 20. 23. & 17. 5. & 21. 11. Ch. 2. 14, 15. Rom. 3. 29. 2 Tim. 3. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 21. Ver. 4. Rev. 3. 19. Heb. 12. 5-11.

sheep, a more amiable idea of the character of a gospel minister, than that which is here exhibited. With what a frankness and openness of soul does the Apostle appeal to their consciences, as to the integrity and benevolence of his behaviour among them, while, unterrified by all the indignities and inhumanities that he had met with at Philippi, he immediately renewed the same combat at Thessalonica, and contended boldly with all the enemies of the gospel, not esteeming his liberty, or his life, on an occasion of so great importance.

With such courage let the ministers of Christ face all danger and oppositions: with such simplicity of heart let them deliver their important message; not with deceit, uncleanness, or guile, but as those who remember that they have been put in trust with the gospel by God himself, and therefore must be solicitous not to please men, but God, who trieth the heart. And may they ever be superior to those views of avarice, ambition, or popular applause, which would lead them to sacrifice truth to the affection or favour of men, or even to the fear of being thought to do it. And let them, with all this intrepidity and firmness of soul, put on a gentleness and sweetness of disposition—a gentleness like that with which a nurse cherishes her children. While their people, like new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. ii. 2.), let ministers draw forth that precious nourishment to them, as imparting even their own souls unto them, and willing to wear out, or, if such should be the will of God, to sacrifice their lives in such a service.

Let them particularly endeavour, by all prudent care, suitable to the circumstances in which God has fixed them, not to make themselves burthensome to the people in temporal things, nor, under the pretence of a Divine mission, to tyrannize over their consciences; but behave with such integrity and such sanctity, that they may be able cheerfully to appeal to God as a witness of it, and may also have a testimony in the breast of each of their flock. And O that the entrance of such ministers among their people, and their labours with them, may not be in vain; but that the blessed consequence of all the charges, entreaties, and consolations which they are addressing to them, may be this—that they may walk worthy of God, worthy of that kingdom and glory, to the views and blessings of which he has condescended to call them! Then will all

the fatigues of their office sit lightly upon them, while they see the blessed purposes of it answered. Then will they finish their course with joy, and bless God with their dying breath, that he ever called them to so great, so important a work.

Again. May Divine grace teach our souls ever to distinguish between the authority of the word of men and the word of God; that we may always set them at a due distance from each other, and may feel the peculiar energy of the Divine Word, with which it operates in all them that believe! May we experience this, whatever be the consequences, yea, though we should be exposed to sufferings, severe as those which Jews or Heathens at first inflicted on the professors, or even on the preachers of the gospel! Adored be that power of Divine Grace which went along with it, so that when the envious disciples of Moses, after having slain the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as their own prophets, forbad his messengers to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, these faithful ambassadors of health and life feared none of their threatenings, or cruelties, but courageously declared the matter as it was, testifying, both to Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ! Acts, xx. 21.

The Jews, in the mean time, filled up the measure of their sins, till wrath came upon them to the uttermost: and so will all the opposition which is made to the gospel end to those who are implacable and obstinate in it. They who believe not that Christ is He, shall die in their sins. Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder. (John, viii. 24. Matt. xxi. 44.)

Therefore, let the ministers of Christ, however Satan may attempt to hinder them, go on faithfully and courageously in their work, and watch over the souls which they have instrumentally converted. When absent from them in body, let them not be absent in heart; but let them be thinking of their state, and often caring and praying for them: for what will be their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord?—even those faithful saints, who are converted to God by the instrumentality of their labours, or are trained up by them in the ways of holiness, and prove faithful unto death. May all those ministers, who serve God with their spirit in the gospel of his Son, have many such spiritual children: and,

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

° Acts, 17. 5—9. Ch. 2. 2, 14. & 1. 6. 2 Thes. 1. 4—6.

in the views of their increasing piety, may they daily anticipate the glory and the joy with which they hope at last to deliver them to their Divine Master!

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The Apostle reminds the Thessalonians

1. Of his manner of preaching among them. *For yourselves, brethren, knew our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain, with great swelling words of vanity, or empty ineffectual harangues, but with the power of the gospel, and the mighty word of truth. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, undismayed at the persecutions which we had endured, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention, as in an agony labouring after your conversion, amidst all the opposition that we had to encounter. For our exhortation was not of deceit, we broached no false doctrine, nor had any intention to deceive; nor of uncleanness, but tending to discourage all manner of impurity; nor in guile, for we spoke the truth from the heart; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, and had this honour conferred upon us to be appointed his ambassadors, even so we speak, under a sense of the weighty charge committed to us; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts, to whom we study to approve ourselves in simplicity and godly sincerity: for neither at any time used we flattering words, in order to insinuate and ingratiate ourselves into your confidence, or to encourage you with the least imagination of impunity in your sins, as ye know; nor did we put on a cloak of religion, to conceal designs of covetousness, in order to make an advantage of you; God is witness to the uprightness of our hearts respecting you. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, desiring human applause, or esteem, when we might have been burdensome, and demanded our maintenance of you, as the apostles of Christ.*

2. Of his conduct and conversation among them. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, with the greatest tenderness: so being affectionately desirous of you, of your happiness and salvation, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, ready to spend and be spent in the service of your faith, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, with our own hands, to earn our maintenance, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God freely. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe, conscientiously discharging every duty of religion towards God, and of righteousness towards men: as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, with the affection and authority of the kindest parent, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory, to*

the blessings of his grace in time, and of his glory in eternity; and will bestow them upon you, if you perseveringly cleave to the Son of his Love. *Note;* (1.) They can speak boldly who can appeal to their own conduct for the example of what they teach. (2.) The more love and tenderness accompanies our exhortations, the more effectual are they likely to prove.

2dly, The Apostle proceeds,

1. To thank God for their ready reception of the gospel word. *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, which may be fallacious, or at best of uncertain authority, but as it is, in truth, the word of God, and, as such, deserving the deepest reverence and obedience; which effectually worketh also in you that believe, producing the most blessed consequences, and carrying with it the evidence of its divine original. Note;* (1.) Though the treasure of God's word is committed to earthen vessels, its excellence is not therefore the less: and we must remember not so much who dispenses it, as whose word it is, that with reverence and godly fear we may hear and obey. (2.) Wherever the gospel is received into the heart, it works effectually to the present salvation of the soul, casting the whole man into its blessed mould.

2. They were honoured with the cross, and bore it most exemplarily. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews, and sustained the shock of persecution with the same unshaken fortitude and unwearied patience.*

3. He mentions with horror the dreadful guilt and rooted enmity of the Jewish zealots, his and their chief opponents, *who both killed the Lord Jesus, with the most atrocious wickedness imbruing their hands in his sacred blood, and murdered their own prophets, and have with the utmost violence persecuted us his apostles; and they please not God, though they flatter themselves that they are his only-favourites; they act in direct opposition to his will, and are contrary to all men, abhorring both Gentiles and Christians, and filled with implacable malice against those who use any means for the conversion of the Heathen to Christ; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles the gospel of God's grace, that they might be saved, to fill up the measure of their sins away, and to hasten the full vials of God's vengeance upon their devoted heads: for the wrath is come upon them, and hath begun to seize them in their rejection of God, and will be poured out to the uttermost, or to the end, in the entire destruction of their city, nation, and temple, and in the eternal perdition of the impenitent. Note;* When the sinner's iniquities are at the full, then wrath cometh to the uttermost.

3dly, The Apostle,

1. Excuses his absence, which was not voluntary, but through.

5 For this cause, ¹ when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, ² lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

¹ Ver. 1. ² Cor. 7. 5. 1 Cor. 2. 3,

³ 1 Cor. 7. 5. ⁴ 2 Cor. 11. 3. Gal. 2. 2. & 4. 11. Phil. 2. 16. with Ch. 2. 1—12.

through unavoidable hindrances. *But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, and obliged reluctantly to leave you, as helpless orphans, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire, longing to converse with you, and build up your souls on the true foundation. Wherefore we would have come unto you, (even I Paul,) once and again, and made efforts for that purpose; but Satan hindered us, sowing such dissensions and raising such difficulties as made our abode in these parts, where we now are, absolutely necessary. Note: We have a busy enemy, who is ever seeking to lay obstacles in our way. We need therefore to watch against his devices, and to resist his wiles.*

2. He assures them of his high affection and regard for them. *For what is our hope in our labours, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? what revives, animates, and comforts our souls under all our work and sufferings? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Yes, verily, For ye are our glory and joy; while, looking forward to the great day of Christ's appearing, we confidently hope to present you before him as the happy fruits of our labour, to your eternal blessedness, and to our own immortal honour.*

CH A P. III.

BY the reasoning in the beginning of this chapter, it appears, that the learned Greeks took occasion, from the sufferings of the Christian preachers, to raise a third and very plausible objection against the miracles which they wrought in confirmation of the gospel. Said the philosophers, If these men really possess miraculous powers, why do they flee from their enemies, and not rather work miracles for their own preservation: which, at the same time, would convince the most obstinate that they are sent of God? The behaviour of these pretended missionaries from God, who, instead of restraining their enemies by their miraculous power, flee from them in a frightened, clandestine manner, is a clear proof that their miracles are nothing but impositions on the senses of mankind. The reader will recollect, that this very argument was used for discrediting our Lord's miracles, Matth. xxvii. 41, 42. *Also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him.* This objection being much insisted on by the philosophers, some of the Thessalonian brethren who came to Berea informed Timothy thereof, who, when he followed the Apostle to Athens, no doubt, related the matter. Now, this being a natural objection, the Apostle was greatly distressed that he had it not in his power to return to Thessalonica, to shew the falsity of it. *Wherefore, when he could no longer bear his anxiety, that is, his solicitude for the welfare of his Thessalonians, he determined to remain at Athens alone, ver. 1. And sent Timothy to establish the brethren, and to exhort them concerning their faith, ver. 2.—by telling*

them, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: he meant the afflictions which had befallen him, and his sudden flight from Thessalonica and Berea; as is plain from what follows; *for yourselves know that we were appointed to this: we apostles were appointed to suffer, and were not allowed to deliver ourselves from persecution by miracle, ver. 3.—This the Thessalonians knew; for St. Paul had told them, that when Christ made him an apostle, he appointed him to suffer for his name; that all men might have a clear proof of his being himself fully persuaded of the things which he preached. The power of miracles, therefore, was not bestowed upon the apostles that they might deliver themselves from persecution.—They were to prove the truth of the gospel by their sufferings, as well as by their miracles. Besides, St. Paul having foretold the very persecution which befel him in Thessalonica, his sudden flight could not be imputed to fear, occasioned by any unforeseen evil, but to Christ's injunction to his apostles, when persecuted in one city, to flee into another. Upon the whole, the Apostle's fleeing from Thessalonica and Berea was no proof of the falseness of his miracles, as his enemies contended; neither was it inconsistent with his character as a missionary from God, ver. 4.*

Objection 4. A fourth objection was levelled, by the philosophers, against St. Paul in particular. They affirmed that, notwithstanding all his fair speeches to the Thessalonians, he did not really love them. For he had left them to bear the persecution by themselves, without giving them any assistance, either by his exhortations or his example. And from this they inferred that he was a hypocrite, who had deceived them with professions of a love which had no place in his heart. In answer, the Apostle told the Thessalonians, that they might know how tenderly he loved them, from the following circumstances: that, not knowing what impression the arguments of the sophists might make upon them, his anxiety for their perseverance in the faith was extreme; and that he sent Timothy to them from Athens, for this purpose also, *that he might know their faith, ver. 5.—Farther, he told them, that, being informed by Timothy of their firm adherence to the gospel, and of their entertaining a most affectionate remembrance of him, their spiritual father, at all times; and that they as earnestly desired to see him, as he to see them, ver. 6.—the good news had given him the greatest consolation in all his afflictions, ver. 7.—because their standing firm in the Lord, was life to him, ver. 8.—Wherefore, he could not be enough thankful to God for all the joy which he felt on account of their steadfastness, ver. 9.—And having the greatest concern for their welfare, his daily prayer to God was, that he might be allowed to visit them, in order to supply the deficiencies of their faith, by giving them more complete views, both of the doctrines and of the evidences of the gospel, ver. 10. Withal he prayed, that God himself would remove every obstacle which might hinder his prosperous journey to them, ver. 11.—And, still farther*

6 But now when ^b Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see you* :

7 Therefore, brethren, ⁱ we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distresses by your faith :

8 For ^k now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what ^l thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God ;

10 ^m Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might ⁿ perfect that which is lacking in your faith ?

11 ^o Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{*} direct our way unto you.

12 ^p And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you :

13 To the end he may ^q stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the ^r coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

^b Acts, 18. 5. 2 Cor. 7. 4, 6, 7. Phil. 1. 8. Rom. 12. 9—21. Ch. 5. 12, 13. & 2. 17, 18. Ver. 9, 10. ⁱ Ch. 2. 2, 15. Ver. 5. Acts, 17. 1—18. 2 Cor. 7. 4. 2 John, 4. Ver. 8, 9. ^k Ver. 7. 1 Cor. 15. 53. & 16. 13. Heb. 10. 23. & 4. 14. 2 John, 4. 3. John, 3. 4. Rev. 7. 3, 11. ^l Eph. 5. 20. Phil. 4. 6. Ch. 5. 18. See Ch. 1. 2, 3. Acts, 26. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Rom. 1. 9—12. & 15. 23. Luke, 24. 44. Ch. 2. 17. ^m Acts, 26. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Rom. 1. 9—12. & 15. 23. Luke, 24. 44. Ch. 2. 17. ⁿ Col. 1. 28. Eph. 4. 12. Phil. 1. 29, 6. 2 Thes. 1. 11. & 2. 17. ^o Ezra, 8. 21. Ps. 5. 8. & 32. 8. & 73. 24. Prov. 3. 5, 6. Jer. 10. 23. ^{*} Or guide. ^p Jam. 1. 17. Ch. 4. 9, 10. & 5. 15. ^q 1 Cor. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 10. Ch. 5. 23. 2 Thes. 2. 17. ^r 1 Pet. 1. 7. Rom. 13. 8. Mt. 7. 12. & 23. 39. 1 John, 3. 14, 23. & 4. 12, 20. & 2. 10. ^s 1 Cor. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 10. Ch. 5. 23. 2 Thes. 2. 17. Col. 1. 22. Jude, 24. ^t Zech. 14. 5. Ch. 14. 16, 17. 1 Thes. 1. 7—10. Jude, 14. Mat. 24. 30, 31. & 25. 31. Rev. 1. 7. & 20. 11, 12.

to convince them how tenderly he loved them, he supplicated Christ in particular, to make them *abound as much in love to one another, and to all men, as he abounded in love towards them*, ver. 12.—*that their hearts might be established unblameable in holiness*, and be found so *at the coming of Christ to judgment*, ver. 13.—Sentiments and affections of this kind never were found in the breast of any impostor. And therefore the Apostle's tender feelings, thus warmly expressed, (the sincerity of which the Thessalonians could not call in question, when they considered his known veracity, as well as all the other circumstances mentioned in this earnest apology) might well convince them that the calumnies whereby the enemies of the gospel endeavoured to discredit him as a missionary from God, were without foundation.

Ver. 2. Our fellow-labourer] It appears, from Acts, xvii. 14. that Timothy had been in those parts before, as St. Paul's fellow-labourer; and as, doubtless, he was well known to the Thessalonians, his coming, on this occasion, would be the more agreeable to them.

Ver. 3. For yourselves know] Here seems to be a particular allusion to Acts, ix. 15, 16. xx. 23. What Apostles, prophets, and even common Christians were to expect in the world, see Matth. x. 34—36. Acts, xvii. 5. Rom. viii. 17. Ephes. iii. 13. &c. &c.

Ver. 6. But now when Timotheus came, &c.] This should rather be read, *But now that Timothy is come,—and hath brought,—therefore* (ver. 7.) *we are comforted*.

Ver. 8. For now we live, if, &c.] “For now I live, indeed; I relish and enjoy life, seeing you continue steadfast in the profession, faith, and practice of the Christian religion, in which, through the favour of God, I was employed in initiating you.” Here is a *pattern* for all the pastors of the Christian church. It would have deprived this great Apostle of much of the satisfaction and comfort of his life, to have heard that his converts in general, at

Thessalonica or elsewhere, did not persevere; but it was happiness, it was comfort, it was *life* worth enjoying, to hear of their steadiness and perseverance.

Ver. 11. Direct our way unto you.] This prayer of St. Paul was heard, and his request granted; for he had an opportunity to go over Macedonia again once or twice, and to give them much exhortation, Acts, xx. 1—3. He then most probably perfected what was still wanting in their faith, and rectified or confirmed them as to their experience and practice.

Ver. 13. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.] How often and how skilfully does St. Paul mention the Lord Jesus Christ, and his coming to judgment, to support and animate them both to do and to suffer, according to the good and holy and acceptable will of God! See Dan. vii. 10. When our Lord Jesus Christ comes thus attended, he will present all his sincere and faithful followers to his Father, *unblameable in holiness*. Who would not desire to be thus presented to God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, attended by all his saints, and all the holy angels! See 2 Cor. xi. 2. Ephes. v. 27. 2 Pet. iii. 14.

Inferences.—What an amiable example to gospel-ministers has the great Apostle held forth, in his warm affection to, and solicitous concern for, the church! They, like him, ought to demonstrate their love to, and use all means for, the establishment and comfort of the souls that are under their guidance and care; and for taking off discouragements which might arise from the hardships for the sake of the gospel, which God, in his wise providence, may have allotted to them, and given them reason to expect. And, ah! what a touching and painful grief of heart is it, to tender and faithful pastors, to be afraid, lest, through the subtlety and violence of Satan and his emissaries, professors, of whom they have hoped well, should miscarry,

C H A P. IV.

He exhorteth them to go forward in all manner of godliness, to live holily and justly, to love one another, and quietly to follow their own business; and, last of all, to moderate their sorrow for the dead. And to this last exhortation is annexed a brief description of the resurrection, and second coming of Christ to judgment.

[Anno Domini 52.]

FURTHERMORE then ^a we ^{*} beseech you, brethren, and † exhort you by the

^a 2 Cor. 10. 1. & 5. 20. Rom. 12. 1. Eph. 4. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 11. 2 Pet. 3. 11, 14. Ch. 2. 11. ^{*} Or request. † Or beseech. ^b Mat. 8. 20. 1 Cor. 11. 2. Ch. 2. 18. Col. 2. 6, 7. & 1. 10. Phil. 12. 7, 29. Tit. 2. 11—13. & 3. 8, 14. ^c 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Pet. 1. 4—9. & 3. 18. Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. Ps. 92. 13, 14. ^d Ch. 2. 11, 12. Mat. 28. 20. Ezek. 3. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 3, 23. ^e Exod. 20. 14. Mat. 5. 27. Rom. 6. 19, 22. & 12. 2. 1 Cor. 5. 11. & 6. 9, 15. Gal. 5. 19—21. Eph. 4. 26. & 5. 3, 17, 27. Phil. 4. 8. Col. 3. 5.

Lord Jesus that ^b as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, ^c so ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know ^d what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 ^e For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how

miscarry, and all the labour which had been spent upon them should come to nothing! But O! the joy which springs up in their souls, and adds a relish to life itself, when they find that their dearly beloved charge continue steadfast in the faith, and that their faith works by love to Christ and one another, and to his ministering servants, especially to such of them as have been instruments of their conversion; and that it spreads with a benevolent temper towards all mankind! How does their knowledge of this engage their thankfulness to God, and animate them to go on with cheerfulness and joy in all their services and sufferings; and to contribute what in them lies for the further establishment of their flocks in faith and love, and for perfecting all which concerns them, that they may be unblameable in holiness in the sight of God, until, and in, the day of Christ! For this they have a longing desire to see them, and be further helpful to them; for this they labour, whether present or absent, looking up to God to direct their way; and for this they continually pray to the God of all grace, as their God and Father in Christ, and to the Lord Jesus, as their great Head and Mediator, who will certainly appear a second time, to the salvation of all his faithful saints. And may it be our chief concern, and happy lot, to be found among those who will be gathered together to glorify him at the last day!

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The solicitude which the Apostle felt toward his Thessalonians, engaged him to send Timothy to them, and to be left alone at Athens, however useful or comfortable such a friend, at that time, might be to him. *Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, so anxious was I to hear of your affairs, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ; and this in order also to establish you in the truth, to build you up in the glorious doctrines of the gospel of Jesus, and to comfort you concerning your faith, exhorting you to abide unshaken in your profession, and suggesting the most encouraging motives thereto; that no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.* God has been pleased, for his own glory and the good of his church, in his permissive Providence, to suffer his servant to be thus persecuted; for verily when

we were with you we concealed nothing from you, but told you plainly before the persecutions came, that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear reflecting upon your very critical and trying circumstances, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter should have tempted you to turn back from the profession of Christ, and our labour be in vain, notwithstanding all the promising appearances which emboldened my confident hope in your fidelity. Note; (1.) We must count the cost before we enlist under Christ's banner. (2.) The devil usually seeks to discourage new converts by the violent opposition which he raises against them. (3.) Faithful ministers labour to confirm the faith, and to comfort the hearts of those who are suffering for righteousness' sake.

2dly, The Apostle

1. Expresses the vast satisfaction which he felt at Timothy's report: *but now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your unshaken faith in Christ, and fervent charity towards each other; and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you; therefore, brethren, we were comforted, and all my anxious fears gave place to holy joy in and over you, in all our affliction and distress, which we were here suffering when Timotheus arrived, but which were now made light and easy, by the knowledge of your faith in Jesus, and fidelity to his cause; for now we live and are happy in the midst of all our persecutions and dangers, if, or seeing ye stand fast in the Lord, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel.* Note; Nothing is such an encouragement to suffer for Christ and his gospel, as seeing the happy effects of our labours upon those among whom we minister.

2. The glad news filled him with thankfulness to God, and opened his heart and lips in prayer. *For what thanks can we render to God again for you, or how sufficiently express our gratitude, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God, night and day praying exceedingly, with unusual fervour and vehemence, that, if the Lord so pleased, we might see your face again, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith, helping you to farther and clearer discoveries of the gospel, and leading you to fuller and more assured confidence in the Lord?* Note; (1.) The strongest believers need still to have their faith increased. (2.) The

to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5^s Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

^f 1 Cor. 6. 18, 19. Rom. 1. 24, 26. with 1 Cor. 11. 7.

^g 1 Cor. 7. 9: & 15. 34. Eph. 4. 17—19. 2 Thes. 1. 3. Gal. 4. 8. Rom. 1. 24—23.

(2.) The ministry of the word is the great means which God usually blesses for that happy purpose.

3. He tells them what was a constant subject of his prayers for them. *New God himself and our Father*, who, as *God*, hath all power to supply every want of his people, and, as our *reconciled God and Father*, is, in the fulness of his love and grace, disposed most tenderly towards us; and our *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is equally with the Father the object of our prayers, and through whose mediation we receive an answer of peace, *direct our way unto you*, and in his providence enable us to accomplish the purposes that we have formed. *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you*, advancing to higher attainments in this godlike temper; *to the end that he may stablish your hearts in faith and love, unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father*, approving yourselves to him in all simplicity and godly sincerity, that you may be acknowledged by him at the coming of our *Lord Jesus Christ* to judgment, *with all his saints*, who in that day shall stand before his throne, and share his triumphs. *Note*; (1.) An increase in love is the best symptom of the flourishing state of the Christian's soul. (2.) All God's people desire to be found unblameable in holiness before him, and so to walk as to please him well in all things. (3.) It is God alone by his grace who can make us such as he would have us to be; therefore to him must we, without ceasing, direct our prayer. (4.) The Lord Jesus shall quickly come in glory with all his saints. Happy the soul that shall then have boldness in his presence.

CHAP. IV.

TO make all mankind sensible how worthy of God the Christian religion is, St. Paul and his assistants, in this chapter, appeal to the holy nature of the precepts of the gospel, which they delivered to the Thessalonians from the very first. In reckoning this appeal a third argument in proof of the divine original of the gospel, I think I am not mistaken; because, if the Apostle's intention therein had only been to animate the Thessalonians to a conversation worthy of their Christian profession, there was no occasion for his insisting so earnestly, and so repeatedly, on his having formerly delivered all these precepts to them; but his enjoining them now, in the name of God and of Christ, would have been sufficient.

To this account of the Apostle's design, in calling the attention of the Thessalonians to the precepts of the gospel, I cannot think it any objection that he has not, in so many words, declared it to be his design. It was not his custom formally to declare the purpose for which his arguments are introduced. That circumstance he leaves his readers to gather from the nature of the things which he writes. In the present case, therefore, seeing he appealed to the commandments which he had given them in the name of the Lord Jesus, the author of the gospel, after putting them in mind of the miracles which he had

wrought in their presence, and of his own sincerity and disinterestedness in preaching the gospel, can it be thought that he made such an appeal, in such a discourse, with any other view but to make all who should read this letter sensible that the gospel, being worthy of God, is truly of divine original?

Let us now see how the Apostle states this argument. First of all, he besought and exhorted the Thessalonians, by the Lord Jesus, to abound in that holy manner of living, which he and his assistants had formerly assured them was the way to please God, ver. 1.—Next, he told them, they knew what commandments he had given them by order of the Lord Jesus, ver. 2.—then repeated some of these commandments, whereby it appears that they were directed chiefly against those abominable impurities in which the heathens universally lived, and which many of them practised as worship acceptable to their idol gods. In particular, he had reprehended to them that God willed their sanctification, and their abstaining from all kinds of fornication, ver. 3.—By declaring this to be the divine will, the Apostle made the Thessalonians sensible, from the beginning, that the will of the true God was a very different will from that of the gods whom they formerly served, who willed their votaries to worship them with the grossest acts of uncleanness and intemperance. He told them, likewise, that God willed them to use their body in a holy and honourable manner, ver. 4. *not as a passive instrument of lust, after the manner of the Gentiles, who, being ignorant of God, committed these base actions in honour of their false deities, to whom they ascribed the most immoral characters, ver. 5.*—Also, it was the will of God that no man should injure his brother in respect of chastity, because the Lord Jesus will punish men for all such wicked actions. This the Apostle affirmed he had formerly told and fully testified to them, ver. 6.—Besides, they were to consider that God had not called them to be his votaries for the purpose of gratifying any impure lust, as the heathen gods were supposed to have called their votaries, but to a continued life of purity, ver. 7.—And therefore he assured them, that whoever despised his precepts concerning purity, *despised not man only, but God, who had given him his Holy Spirit, and had inspired him to deliver these precepts in his name, ver. 8.*—By ending his appeal to the commandments which he had delivered to the Thessalonians from the beginning, with this solemn declaration, the Apostle has directly affirmed that all the precepts of the gospel are the precepts of God, and every way worthy of him. And, by placing them in this light, he holds them up to the view of all mankind, as a clear proof of the divine original of the gospel, or, as the Apostle himself expresses it, chap. ii. 13. as a proof that the gospel is the *word, not of men, but of God*; which it would not be, if its precepts were not precepts of holiness.

To complete this argument, St. Paul shows the efficacy of

6 That no man ^a go beyond and * defraud Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also his brother † in any matter: because that ¹ the have forewarned you and testified.

^a 1 Cor. 6. 7, 8. Lev. 19. 11, 13. Exod. 20. 14—17. Gal. 3. 19—21. Eph. 5. 6. Col. 3. 6. Heb. 13. 4.

* Or oppress, or over-reach.

† Or in the matter.

¹ Rom. 1. 18. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel to make men holy, by taking notice that the Thessalonians, since their conversion, were become remarkable for their love to the brethren, ver. 9.—not in their own city only, but *through all the province of Macedonia*. And because, by such a conduct, they greatly strengthened the evidences of the gospel, he *exhorted them to abound still more* in that excellent virtue, ver. 10. *and earnestly to study to be quiet, and to mind their own affairs, and to labour diligently* in some honest occupation, *as he had formerly commanded them*, ver. 11.—Because thus they would be esteemed, even by the heathens, and have wherewith to supply their own wants, without being obliged to any person, ver. 12. The lewdness, and idleness, and officious meddling in other peoples' affairs, which the Apostle tells the Thessalonians he had condemned at his first coming among them, and had forbidden, under the most tremendous penalties, were vices to which the Greeks, in general, were excessively addicted: and therefore, in thus addressing them, it is evident that he was by no means desirous of accommodating the gospel to the humours of men.

The direct and open appeals made, in this Epistle, to the Thessalonians, and to all in whose hearing it was to be read, concerning the sanctity of the precepts which the Apostle delivered in public and in private, whether at his first coming among them, or when he was better acquainted with them, are clear proofs that the preachers of the gospel did not, like the Greek philosophers, hold two different doctrines, or systems, the one calculated for the learned, and the other for the common people. Their doctrines and precepts were the same in all places, and to all persons. These appeals likewise prove, that the gospel itself differed widely, both from the heathen mysteries, in which great excesses were committed by the initiated; and from the heathen religions, in which the people were encouraged to practise many abominable impurities in honour of their gods; while in none of these religions were there set before the people any just notions of the duties of piety and morality.—The express and solemn prohibitions of all manner of vice, and the earnest recommendations of holiness and virtue, which the preachers of the gospel delivered, every where from the beginning, in the name of God, are no small arguments, if there were need of such, that these men were really commissioned and inspired by God. For if they had been impostors, they would not have prescribed a discipline so contrary to the avowed inclinations and practices of the bulk of mankind. The Apostle, therefore, and his coadjutors, very properly insist on the sanctity of the precepts which they enjoined to their disciples from the first, as a strong collateral proof of the divine original of the gospel; because a pure morality is so essential in any religion pretending to be from God, that if the gospel had, in the least, encouraged its disciples in licentiousness, the other arguments, by which it is sup-

ported, would be of less, or no avail, to prove its divine original.

In the remaining part of this chapter, the Apostle calls the attention of the Thessalonians to the dignity of the Holy Jesus, the author of the gospel, and to his power as judge of the world, by foretelling and proving that he will return to the earth, attended by angels, for the purpose of carrying the righteous with him into heaven. Here, however, it is to be observed, that, although the Apostle's professed design in advancing these things was to moderate the sorrow of the Thessalonians for their dead relations, ver. 13.—yet, as shall be shewn in the analysis of chap. v. his intention likewise, in this display of the dignity and power of Jesus as judge, was, to suggest a fourth argument for establishing the divine original of the gospel. Accordingly, in proof of Christ's return from heaven to judge mankind, the Apostle appealed to an event which was then past; namely, to Christ's resurrection from the dead; and affirmed, that *if we believe Jesus died, and rose again, we must also believe his return to judgment, and his bringing of the righteous into heaven*, ver. 14.—Next, for the consolation of the Thessalonians, he assured them, *by the word or commandment of the Lord*, that such of the righteous as are alive at the coming of Christ *shall not anticipate them who are asleep*, by being glorified before them, ver. 15.—Then, to make the Thessalonians sensible of the power and glory of Christ as judge, he told them that the attendant angels will announce his arrival with a shout; that the *archangel*, who, at Christ's descent, is to preside over the angelic hosts, will utter his voice; that a great *trumpet* shall sound, to call the dead out of their graves; and that the *righteous shall rise first*, ver. 16.—Lastly, he informs us, that the righteous shall be *caught up in clouds, to join the Lord in the air; and so they shall be for ever with the Lord*, ver. 17.—These great discoveries being very useful for encouraging the disciples of Christ, when persecuted, and for strengthening their faith in the gospel at all times, the Apostle desired the Thessalonians to comfort one another, in their most pressing straits, by making them the subject of their daily conversations, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Furthermore then, is, as if he had said, As to what remains.*

Ver. 3. *For this is the will of God,] For the will of God is, that you should become holy, and abstain from all impurity. The sense of the original word ἁγιασμός, is very general, and extends to all acts of uncleanness.*

Ver. 5. *As the Gentiles, which know not God,] The idolatrous Gentiles in general, and those of Thessalonica in particular, were remarkable for their impurity; and how brutish and preternatural the vices of many in the heathen world were, and those not condemned, but practised in the worst instances, by their philosophers, may be seen in numbers of ancient Greek and Latin authors. And were those philosophers the fit men to educate youth? to shew them*

7 For ^k God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that ^{*} despiseth, ^l despiseth not man, but God, who ^m hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

9 ⁿ But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you : for ye yourselves are ^o taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do ^p it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia : but we beseech you, brethren, that ye ^q increase more

and more ;

11 And that ^r ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you ;

12 That ^s ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack [†] of nothing.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are ^t asleep, that ^u ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

^k 1 Cor. 6. 18. Heb. 12. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 15. John, 17. 19. Eph. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Mat. 5. 48. Lev. 11. 44. & 19. 2. ^o Or *reprob.*
^l 1 Sam. 8. 7. Luke, 10. 16. ^m 1 Cor. 4. 7. 2 Pet. 1. 21. Rom. 8. 9, 14. 1 John, 3. 24. ⁿ Ch. 5. 1. John, 13. 34. & 14. 26. & 15.
 12. Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Eph. 5. 2. Ch. 3. 12. & 5. 8, 15. 1 Pet. 3. 8. & 4. 8. 1 John, 3. 11, 23. & 4. 21. & 2. 10. ^p Jer. 31. 34.
 John, 6. 45. Heb. 8. 11. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. John, 4. 26. ^q Ch. xvii. Rom. 1. 8. ^r Ver. 1. Ch. 3. 12. ^s 1 Cor. 7. 20, 24. 1 Pet.
 4. 15. Acts, 20. 34. Eph. 4. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 13. 2 Thes. 3. 7. & 10. 12. ^t Rom. 12. 17. & 13. 13. 1 Cor. 14. 40. Col. 4. 5. 2 Cor. 8. 21.
 & 13. 7. Phil. 4. 8. 1 Pet. 2. 12. 1 Tim. 2. 2. Heb. 13. 18. Ch. 2. 10. [†] Or *of no man.* ^u Ver. 15. Acts, 7. 60. 2 Pet. 3. 4. 1 Cor.
 15. 6, 18. See 1 King, 2. 10. ^v Lev. 19. 28. Deut. 14. 1. 2 Sam. 12. 20.

them the beauty of virtue, and the odiousness of vice?—The representations of the boundless and unnatural lusts which their own poets gave the heathens, even of their chief gods, were enough to encourage their votaries in the like enormities : nay, such monstrous obscenities became part of their religious worship, as Christian and chaste ears could not even bear to have mentioned. See Eph. v. 12. What their satirists, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius have intimated, and what Suetonius has suggested, as to the emperors themselves, would make a modest person blush even to read or hear ; and when the people, philosophers, emperors, and gods were such notorious offenders, how exact a picture has the Apostle drawn of the heathen world, in Rom. i. 21—32.

Ver. 6. That no man go beyond and defraud, &c.] And finally, that no one over-reach or injure his brother in that respect ; namely, of adultery or impurity. All the best commentators allow this to be the sense of the passage.

*Ver. 8. Despise not man, but God,] The apostles and evangelists alone had the whole scheme of the gospel revelation immediately from God, and were the great fountains of Christian knowledge, as it related either to faith or practice. They therefore were to be attended to, as truly divine oracles ; and he that despised *them* despised that Spirit from whom they had their inspiration : and if we understand it according to the common reading,—that God had given his Holy Spirit to the apostles, and that what they taught was by divine inspiration, and therefore not to be despised, we shall see confirmations of this great truth, in Luke, x. 16. Acts, v. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12. xi. 23. xv. 1, 3. Gal. i. 11, 12.*

Ver. 9.] St. Paul here commends them for their love to each other ; but generally when he commends them, it is to introduce some further advice,—as he does here ; for immediately after the commendation, he presses them to abound therein more and more, ver. 10. There seem to have been some idle persons and busy bodies among the Christians at Thessalonica, who went about tattling from house to house, and would not work for a subsistence, but were

burdensome to their neighbours, and a scandal to Christianity. They seem to have given the Apostle a great deal of trouble and uneasiness ; as appears, not only from ver. 11, 12. but also from 2 Thess. iii. 6—12. 1 Tim. v. 13. However, to take off the harshness of the reproof in the passage before us, he introduces it with the commendation of their love to each other ; that they might not be discouraged, as if their Apostle had entirely condemned their conduct. Comp. 1 Cor. xi. ver. 2. with ver. 17. The phrase of *being taught of God*, is used Isaiah, liv. 13. John, vi. 45. and alluded to in various other parts of scripture. The contentions of the heathen gods could never have taught them this brotherly love ; but the example and command of the God of love, of Jesus the Prince of peace, plainly pointed out this harmony and mutual benevolence, for which the primitive Christians were remarkable. See Heb. xiii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 17. and Philem. ver. 1.

Ver. 11. That ye study to be quiet, &c.] Idleness is utterly unbecoming a reasonable creature, and is not only a great vice itself, but the seed of many and greater vices. Nothing can be a higher scandal to any denomination, or profession, than lazy, pragmatistical, officious people, who mind every body's business but their own. They are a common nuisance, and ought to be discouraged, if the churches would have peace, and recommend religion. But, indeed, idleness, in every sort and degree, stands condemned by the Christian institutes. See Acts, xx. 34. Rom. xiii. 13. Ephes. iv. 28. Col. iv. 5. 2 Thess. iii. 7—13. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

Ver. 12. Honestly] Decently, reputably, The word rendered *of nothing*, *undes*, may be translated *of no man*. The Apostle bids them *mind their own business, and work with their own hands*, that they may be in *repute* and *credit* among their heathen neighbours. For a man who cannot maintain himself, and is reduced to beggary by idleness, is an object of universal and just contempt.

Ver. 13.] The Apostle had intimated, ch. iii. 10. that he wanted to make them another visit at Thessalonica, in order

14 For ^a if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which ^b sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you ^c by the word of the Lord, that ^d we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 ^b For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: ^c and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we ^d which are alive *and* remain ^e shall be caught up together with them in the

^a 1 Cor. 15. 4, 12, 13, 20—23, 45, 49. Rom. 8. 11. 11. 26. 19. John, 14. 19. & 11. 25. Ch. 3. 13. ^b 1 Cor. 15. 13. Heb. 11. 13. Rev. 14. 13. Pl. 23. 4. ^c 1 Kings, 13, 17, 18. & 20. 35. & 22. 14. Ezek. 3. 17. ^d 1 Cor. 15. 51—53. ^e Mat. 24. 31. & 25. 31. 2 Thes. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 15. 52. Acts, 1. 11. Pl. 47. 5. Rev. 20. 11, 12. ^f 1 Cor. 15. 23, 57. Ver. 15. ^g Ver. 15. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. ^h Rev. 11. 12. John, 12. 32. 11. 27. 2 Kings, 2. 11. Acts, 1. 9.

order to perfect that which was lacking in their faith. Perhaps what he says here was part of what he wanted to teach them, as not having seen it proper before to enter into these discoveries; namely, whether the *last generation* should die at all or no; and whether the dead saints should be raised before the living were transformed. But, having heard that they still lamented over their dead, like their heathen neighbours, and perhaps that they still hired mourners,—were apt to repine at the Divine providence,—to lament, and be excessively dejected; he here delivers two most important truths, to dry up their tears: 1. He briefly repeats what he had taught already, strongly asserting the resurrection of the pious dead to an eternal life of holiness and happiness, in consequence of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to his express and repeated promises. 2. He makes this new discovery,—that the last generation of saints should not die at all, but be on a sudden changed into immortals. From which he concludes, that the Christians ought to leave off their excessive lamentations for their deceased friends, and no longer imitate their heathen neighbours, who, though they might have some obscure notions and expectations of the immortality of the soul, had no such hopes as the Christian of a resurrection from the dead, and of an eternal life of such holy and glorious enjoyments, in the presence of the *Lord Jesus Christ, and of the holy angels*, and of all the wisest, worthiest, and best of men, who will be perfect and happy as well as they, ver. 13—18.

Ver. 14. *Which sleep in Jesus*] The state of the bodies of the pious dead in their graves is not only here, but in many other passages of scripture, described as a *short sleep*, compared with that eternal life into which they shall awake in the morning of the resurrection. This 14th verse ought to be read in a parenthesis, it being a repetition of what the Apostle had more fully instructed them in before. The resurrection of Christ was the grand fact upon which the whole Christian religion depended; and with it, the resurrection of mankind in general, but more especially of the *just*, was joined in the closest connection. This is what the Apostle elsewhere shews at large; here he only reminds the Thessalonians of it in a short parenthesis, and passes on to the further discovery mentioned in the preceding note.

Ver. 15. *That we which are alive, &c.*] Because here and elsewhere St. Paul speaks in the *first person plural*, and thereby seems to join himself with those who should

be alive at Christ's second coming, when the dead are to be raised, and the living transformed,—some have too hastily concluded that he thought the day of the Lord to be just then at hand; and that he, and several of the Christians of that age, should be of the number of those who should (not *die* and be raised again, but) be *transformed*: but they are great strangers to St. Paul's stile and manner, who have not observed in what a latitude he uses the word *we*; sometimes thereby meaning *himself*, and at other times himself and his companions; sometimes the *Apostles*, and at other times the *Christians* in general;—in some places the Jewish, and in other places the Gentile Christians. Besides, how often are all Christians considered as one church, one family, one kingdom, one city, one building, the members of one and the same body, whether they be in heaven or on earth, in what age or nation soever they live! Further, to confirm this interpretation, it is evident that St. Paul expected not to escape death, but that he should die, and rise again, 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. Phil. i. 23. iii. 10, 11, &c. And, finally, when the Thessalonians, by the means either of some weak or some designing persons, were led into this mistake, St. Paul himself wrote them a second Epistle, in which he assures them, that he did not design to say any such thing as *that the day of the Lord was at hand*; for a grand apostacy was first to happen in the Christian church. See the notes on 2 Thess. ii. 1—12. Dr. Heylin renders the latter part of this verse thus: "*That we who remain alive until the coming of the Lord, shall not enter [into bliss] before those who are departed.*"

Ver. 16. *With the trump of God*:] It was a custom among the ancients to summon assemblies by the *sound of a trumpet*: to which custom probably the Apostle here alludes. It has generally been inferred from the next clause, that good men shall rise before the wicked, and 1 Cor. xv. 23. seems to favour it. Dr. Heylin renders the verse, *For as soon as the order shall be given, by the voice of the archangel, and by the trumpet of God, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven; and the dead, &c.*

Ver. 17. *Shall be caught up together with them, &c.*] A cloud conducted by angels was our Lord's triumphal chariot when he ascended; and such a bright cloud will be his triumphal chariot when he comes down as judge on the great day, Acts, i. 9, 11. Rev. i. 7. Dan. vii. 13. And it is here intimated, as if his faithful saints also were thus to ascend into glory. Dr. Heylin reads this verse, *After that, such of us as are then alive shall, together with*

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so
shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore * * comfort one another with
these words.

* Joh. 12. 26. & 14. 3. & 17. 24. Rev. 22. 3—5. & 21. 3, 4. If. 60. 19, 20.

* If. 40. 1, 2. Luke, 21. 28. Ch. 5. 12, 14. Heb. 12. 12.

† Thef. 1. 10. & 2. 16, 17. *O: exhort.

them, be taken up into the air, upon the clouds, to meet the Lord; and so we shall eternally live with him.

Inferences.—Who would not wish to be instructed in every thing which might conduce to our walking so as to please God? Who would not delight in frequent exhortations to abound in such a conduct more and more, that every day may improve upon the last, till we perfect holiness in his fear? Blessed be God, the rules are plain, and our own conscience must bear witness to the reasonableness and goodness of them. This is the will of God, even our sanctification; that we should be honoured with his amiable image, and, by sharing something of his moral character, may share something of that happiness which in the perfection of holiness he enjoys. He has, indeed, given us a *compounded* nature, and has appointed us for a time to struggle with its *animal powers*, that, by a victory over them, we may approve our duty and obedience, and be fitted for a purer happiness above than this low state of being will admit. Let the professors of Christianity, therefore, learn to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, and not be captives to the mean lusts of concupiscence and uncleanness; as the heathens, who, not having the knowledge of God, were less inexcusable than we in those indulgences, for which the knowledge of themselves, by the light of their inferior dispensation, would, in some degree, condemn them.

Let us, as we dread the displeasure and vengeance of God, the supreme Guardian of the rights of his creatures, take heed that we do not allow ourselves, even when it is most in our power, to go beyond, or defraud our brethren in any matter; but endeavour to shew that we have, indeed, been taught of God to love one another, and that we have received into our very hearts that maxim which our gracious Redeemer has given us, that we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us. On this principle, likewise, let us diligently employ ourselves in our own proper affairs, that, instead of being the burdens of society, we may, in our respective spheres, be its supports; and, quietly attending to what lies within our own province, let us leave ambitious schemes and projects to others; thinking ourselves happy enough if we may be approved by *him*, who will one day reward or punish, not according to the distinction and elevation of our stations, but according to the integrity or unfaithfulness with which we have behaved ourselves in them. So shall we secure a testimony even in the consciences of *those that are without*, who would, perhaps, ungenerously and unrighteously rejoice in an occasion of charging upon the gospel of Christ the follies and irregularities of its professors.

They will never be able to charge any thing on the gospel itself, if they take their ideas of it from the writings of these, its authentic teachers. And let it be remembered, that they gave such abundant evidence of the au-

thority with which they taught, that he who despiseth them, despiseth not man, but God, from whom they derived *the Spirit* by which they preached and wrote. His voice let us hear with reverence, his dictates let us humbly obey. The hour is near in which he will assert the honour of his word, and demonstrate to all the world the wisdom of submitting to its dictates.

Again. Who can be sufficiently thankful for the strong consolations which the latter part of this chapter administers! How many drooping hearts have been cheered by them in every age, while successively mourning over the pious dead! How often have we ourselves been driven to them, as to a sacred anchor, when our hearts have been overwhelmed within us! and if God continue us a little longer, what repeated occasions may arise of flying to them again! When Providence is pleased to make such breaches upon us, let us not sorrow as those who have no hope, for our pious, deceased friends, or for ourselves. Surely we cannot doubt the very first and most fundamental articles of our faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God; and if we do, indeed, assuredly believe these, what a blessed train of consequences will they draw after them! and this consequence most apparently, that they who sleep in Jesus shall not finally perish, but shall be brought with *him* to grace his triumph.

And, O what a triumph will that be! Let us now anticipate the joy with which, if faithful here, we shall then lift up our heads, and see our complete salvation drawing nigh. What though we die, and moulder in the grave? the faints then alive shall not prevent us: though the last memorial of our names may long have perished from the earth, it shall appear that they are written in heaven. And when the Lord himself descends from heaven, with that earth-rending shout, when the trump of God shall sound, his dead shall live, like his dead body: shall they revive; they that dwell in the dust shall rise and sing; for his dew is as that falling upon herbs, and the earth shall cast forth its dead. (If. xxvi. 19.)

But who can now conceive the rapture with which so many millions shall start up at once from their beds of dust, all arrayed in robes of glory; and, spurning the earth in which they have been so long intombed, and all that is mortal and corruptible, shall soar aloft in one joyful company, with those faithful faints who shall then be found alive, to meet the Lord in the air; forming a mighty host, bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and awful as an army with banners (Cant. vi. 10.), they shall soar to meet their Lord, attracted by Divine love, and borne on in their flight by an almighty power. They shall ascend to him; they shall be owned by him; they shall be seated near him: for Christ, who is their life, shall appear; therefore shall they appear with him in glory (Col. iii. 4.).

Nor shall it be merely the triumph of one day, or of any limited period, how long soever. It is the promise of

CHAP. V.

He proceedeth in the former description of Christ's coming to judgment, and giveth divers precepts; and so concludeth the Epistle.

[Anno Domini 52.]

BUT^a of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto

you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that^b the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3^c For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with

^a Mat. 24. 3. 5. Acts, 1. 7. Ch. 4. 9. ^b Luke, 12. 39. & 21. 34. Mark, 13. 34. Mat. 24. 42—44. & 25. 13. ^c 2 Pet. 3. 10. Rev. 3. 3. 16. 15. ^d 16. 13. 8. & 21. 4. Jer. 13. 21. Hof. 13. 13. Rev. 18. 7, 8. Luke, 17. 27. & 21. 34, 35. ^e 2 Thes. 1. 9.

of his faithfulness and of his love to his persevering saints, that so they shall ever be with the Lord. It is a glory that shall never decay, a meeting secure from all danger, from all possibility of future separation. In what circumstance of affliction may not these consolations be felt! What torrent of tears are they not able to stop! What groans of distressed nature will they not be sufficient to turn into songs of joy! Thanks, everlasting, ever new, ever growing thanks be to God, who always causeth his believing people to triumph in Christ, in the views of such a felicity! And let the whole choir of saints, the living and the dead, unite in one joyful Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. We have,

1. An exhortation to obedience. *Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, in his name and by his authority, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more, with greater watchfulness, diligence, and zeal, according to God's holy word. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus, so clearly that none can plead ignorance, and urged upon your consciences with those most powerful arguments which should engage your obedience thereunto. Note; the more clearly the path of duty is marked out to us, the more steadily are we bound to walk in it.*

2. A caution against all impurity, as most opposite to the Christian character. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should be in heart and conduct obedient to all his commands; particularly that ye should abstain from fornication, that common sin among the Gentiles, and to which, in the days of your unregeneracy, you may have been addicted; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel, his body, in sanctification and honour, with such purity and chastity as never to be guilty of an action unworthy those who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that would defile and disgrace you in the sight of God and every real Christian; not in the lust of concupiscence, indulging the vile affections of the natural heart, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, not only abstaining from every act of injustice, but especially from robbing them of that which is dearer to them than any earthly goods, the affections or the person of their wife; or drawing them into any horrid and unnatural acts of lewdness: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified, and will execute condign punishment on such workers of iniquity. For God hath not called us unto unclean-*

ness, but unto holiness, in his gospel enjoining all purity of heart and conversation on his people. He therefore that despiseth our admonitions, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit, by whose inspiration I speak, and whose office it is to sanctify the bodies, souls, and spirits of the faithful, and prepare them for the glory which is promised. Note; Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; and into his kingdom shall nothing enter which defileth or maketh unclean.

2dly, The Apostle inculcates,

1. The great duty of brotherly love. *But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another, and are exemplary for your fervent and enlarged charity: and indeed ye do it, not only towards the members of your own church, but toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But, as there is still room for much higher advancement, we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more. Note; (1.) We are never so high in grace, but we have summits of holiness yet to climb, and shall continue to have, till we reach the heavenly Zion, and come to join the spirits of the just there made perfect. (2.) All good comes from God: unless we are taught of him, as every true believer will be, no human lessons can lead us into the spirit of Christianity.*

2. Of quietness and industry in our callings. *And that ye study to be quiet, make it your holy ambition to live in peace with all men, not officiously intruding into other people's affairs; and to do your own business, minding the concerns of your own family and calling; and to work with your own hands, as many as by your station must earn your bread by daily labour, as we commanded you, idleness and Christianity being utterly inconsistent: that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, paying every man his due; and that ye may have lack of nothing, but be furnished with all that yourselves and families may need, and not be burdensome to any.*

3dly, The Apostle suggests the most encouraging arguments to support the Thessalonians under the loss of their near and dear relatives. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, and departed in the faith of Christ, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope, as the heathen who make such howling and lamentation for the dead; since we have a hope full of immortality: for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, raising their bodies from the dust at the last day, as his was raised from the tomb. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that*

we

child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,

that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5^d Ye are all the children of light, and

^d Acts, 26. 18. Eph. 5. 18. & 3. 17—19. & 5. 8. Col. 1. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Luke, 16. 8. Phil. 1. 7. & 2. 15. Rom. 13. 12, 14.

we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, even those members of his church who will be numbered among the living in the great day of his appearing and glory, shall not prevent them which are asleep, so as to anticipate their resurrection: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout of triumph and exultation, with the voice of the archangel that shall attend his orders, and with the trump of God, like that tremendous sound which once issued from Sinai's top; and the dead in Christ, those who departed in his faith and fear, shall rise first, in virtue of their union with their exalted Head; then we which are alive and remain, as many saints as will then be found among the living, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, enjoying that eternal blessedness in his immediate presence, which is the summit of our felicity. Wherefore comfort one another with these words, under all your present trials and discouragements, and in the prospect of your own approaching dissolution. Note; (1.) They who die in the faith of Christ, return to his bosom, and their dust sleeps sweetly under his care, waiting a resurrection day. (2.) The faithful shall shortly meet together in bliss, around the Redeemer's throne, and spend a happy eternity in his unceasing praises. (3.) This reviving hope is the comfort and support of the faithful Christian, living and dying.

C H A P. V.

THE Apostle, after describing the coming of Christ to raise the dead, and carry the righteous with him into heaven, does not quit the subject of Christ's return; but proceeds, in this chapter, to foretel the terror which his appearing will occasion to the wicked, and the punishment which he will then inflict upon them. This circumstance merits the reader's attention, because it proves that, in describing Christ's return to the earth, the Apostle had some farther view, besides that of comforting the Thessalonians under the death of their relations. For if this had been his only purpose, nothing more was necessary but to tell them that *if they believed Jesus died and rose again, so also them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* Wherefore, since, in the preceding chapter, he not only mentions the resurrection and departure of the righteous into heaven, but enters into a particular description of the circumstances of Christ's coming to judgment, by which his power and greatness, as the Son of God and Governor of the world, will be manifested; also, since in this chapter he goes on to foretel the terror which Christ's return will occasion to the wicked, and the punishment which he will inflict on them, it seems to me plain, that his chief design in all this was to shew, that, by committing the judgment of the world to Christ, the Father hath confirmed the gospel of his eternal Son, and authorized him, as Mediatorial King, to punish all who do not obey it; as the Apostle also expressly affirms, 2 Thes. i. 8, 9.

To the authority, however, of Christ as judge, and to

the argument for the divine original of the gospel founded thereon, it may be objected, that we have no evidence thereof, excepting the apostle's prophecy, and Christ's own prediction, that he will return as judge. I therefore reply, that although, in ordinary cases, a prophecy proves nothing till it be accomplished, yet we have complete evidence in Christ's resurrection from the dead, that the prophecies concerning his return to judge the world will, in due time, be accomplished. For, seeing the chief priests and elders of the Jews put him to death as a deceiver, because he called himself *the Christ, the Son of the blessed God*, and because he affirmed that *they should see him sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*, namely, to raise the dead and judge the world, his resurrection from the dead is certainly a demonstration that he is the Son of God; that he is now on the right hand of power; and that he will come in the clouds of heaven to judge mankind. Hence the first preachers of the gospel always appealed to Christ's resurrection, as the proof of his return to judgment. For example, St. Paul, in his oration to the learned Athenians, Acts, xvii. 31. *He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*—2. Cor. iv. 14. *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, will raise up us also by Jesus, and will present us with you.*—And in this Epistle, 1 Thess. i. 10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath which is to come.* Hence also, in the proof of the divine original of the gospel under our consideration, the Apostle very beautifully connects Christ's return to judgment with his resurrection from the dead; and produces the two events thus connected as his fourth argument, 1 Thess. iv. 14. *For if we believe that Jesus died, for calling himself the Son of God and judge of the world; and rose again, to prove that these characters really belong to him, even so must we also believe, that them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him from the dead into heaven.* The truth is, we cannot believe the resurrection of Jesus, without believing that he is the Son of God and the judge of the world; and if we believe that he is the Son of God, and the judge of the world, we must believe that his gospel is Divine.

Farther, the argument taken from Christ's power and dignity as judge, is introduced in this proof of the Divine original of the gospel, with peculiar propriety; because it effectually removed those prejudices, which were entertained from the very beginning, against Christ and his gospel, on account of his having been publicly put to death, as a deceiver, by the chief priests. For his crucifixion, though a stumbling-block to the Jews, was necessary to his resurrection, whereby his dignity as the Son of God, and his power as judge of the world, have been established beyond contradiction. Since, then, the return of Christ to judgment is indubitable, the righteous may rejoice in the prospect: firmly persuaded, that if they continue to

the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

* Mat. 25. 5, 13. & 24. 42, 44. Luke, 21. 34, 36. 1 Cor. 14. 34. Rom. 13. 11—14. Eph. 5. 14—17. Tit. 2. 11—14. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. Phil. 4. 5. Jam. 5. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 7. & 5. 8, 9.

cleave to Jesus, they shall obtain the resurrection to eternal life, promised them in the gospel. On the other hand, the wicked may tremble, when they think of the circumstances of Christ's advent foretold by his Apostle, and of that terrible punishment which he will then inflict upon them, and from which none of them shall escape.

His description of the punishment of the wicked the Apostle introduces with observing, that there was no need for his writing any thing to the Thessalonians, concerning the time of Christ's coming to judge the world, ver. 1.—Because, from what he had formerly told them, they knew perfectly that the time of it is uncertain, not having been revealed to any person; and that it will be sudden and unexpected, ver. 2.—and will occasion great terror and astonishment to the wicked, when he comes to punish them. And their terror will be exceedingly increased by this, that, about the time of Christ's coming, they will promise to themselves peace and safety for a great length of years. But while in this state of security, sudden destruction shall come upon them, and none of them shall escape, ver. 3.—This is all that the Apostle thought fit to write at present concerning the punishment of the wicked.

Having then set forth the punishment to be inflicted on the wicked at the coming of Christ, under the idea of sudden destruction, the Apostle told the Thessalonians, that, being fully instructed concerning the design of Christ's coming, that event will not be terrible to them, ver. 4, 5.—Yet, they were not to live slothfully and securely, like the wicked, but they were to watch continually, ver. 6, 7.—and, as persons living in the midst of enemies, they were always to have on the Christian armour, ver. 8.—because God had not appointed them to wrath, that was not *his* will concerning them; but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ, ver. 9.—who died for this end, that whether his faithful saints were of the number of the dead or of the living at his coming, they might live in endless happiness with him, ver. 10.—Lastly, he desired them, a second time, to edify each other, by making the great discoveries contained in this Epistle the subjects of their daily conversations, ver. 11.

His principal design being finished, the Apostle cautioned the Thessalonian brethren against those errors and irregularities which Timothy had informed him still more or less prevailed among them. In particular, because many were not so submissive to their spiritual guides as it became them to be, he besought them to be obedient to those who laboured among them in the ministry, and those whose duty it was to admonish and rebuke them for their faults, ver. 12.—and to esteem them very highly for their works' sake, ver. 13.—On the other hand, the Thessalonian ministers, who, perhaps, had been negligent in admonishing and rebuking the faulty among them, he exhorted to be very plain in warning and reproving such as walked disorderly; and affectionately to support the

weak, by administering proper consolations to them; and to be patient towards all, ver. 14.—and to take care that none of their flock rendered evil for evil to any one, ver. 15.—Then, addressing the pastors and people jointly, he gave them a variety of practical advices, ver. 16—22.—After which he prayed fervently for the sanctification of the Thessalonians, ver. 23, 24.—begged them to pray for him and his assistants, ver. 25.—and laid the rulers of the church under an oath to cause this, his Epistle, to be read to all the holy brethren; namely, in their own city, and in the neighbouring churches, ver. 27.—Then he gave them his Apostolical benediction, ver. 28.

Ver. 1, 2. *But of the times and the seasons, &c.*] “I have told you that the solemn day of universal judgment will certainly come; and have been endeavouring to lead your minds to those views of it which must be most reviving to every true believer: but concerning the particular times and seasons of this grand event, with which the œconomy of Providence in this world is to close, and respecting some very wonderful occurrences which are to precede it, I am satisfied, my brethren, that you have no need of my writing to you largely. For you yourselves do already assuredly know, that wherever we come we make it one of our first duties, that the great day of the Lord, to which our eyes and hearts are so much directed, comes just like a thief in the night, and will surprize the inhabitants of the world in general by a dreadful alarm, when they are sleeping in the deepest security.”

Ver. 2. *The day of the Lord*] This phrase may be understood either figuratively, of Christ's coming in judgment upon the Jews; or literally, of his coming in glory to judge the world. Sometimes, indeed, it is used in the former sense; but it is more generally employed in the latter, by the writers of the New Testament; and the context plainly evinces that this latter is the sense in the present passage. There is a remarkable emphasis in the next expression: A thief comes upon people when they are bound in sleep; and they awake in amazement and confusion, being found unarmed, and in a helpless posture. Again, pangs come upon a woman, ver. 3. when she is eating or drinking, and thinking of nothing less than that hour: and here it is said, not that the day of the Lord will come thus, but that it is actually coming; which increases the awfulness of the representation.

Ver. 5. *Ye are all the children of light,*] Having compared our Lord's sudden and unexpected appearance to the coming of a thief in the night, he takes up the comparison again, ver. 4. and pursues it to ver. 10. calling holy and righteous men the children of the day, and of the light, and idolatrous and wicked persons, ignorant of the truth, children of the night, and of darkness. This comparison is frequently touched upon in the Holy Scriptures, as well as in the heathen poets, with the greatest justness and beauty. Wicked men are represented as skulking

7 For ¹ they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, ² putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, ³ the hope of salvation.

9 For ¹ God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 ^k Who died for us, that, whether we

wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 ¹ Wherefore ^{*} comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, ² to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And ² to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* ² be at peace among themselves.

14 Now we [†] exhort you, brethren,

¹ Prov. 1. 6, 9—11. 1 Cor. 15. 34. Rom. 13. 13. Acts, 2. 15. ² If. 59. 17. Rom. 13. 12. Eph. 6. 11, 13, 14, 17. 2 Cor. 6. 7. ³ Pl. 43. 5. & 42. 11. Rom. 8. 24. & 5. 4, 5. 2 Thes. 2. 16. Gal. 5. 5. Heb. 6. 19. 1 John, 3. 1—3. ¹ Jude, 4. 1 Pet. 2. 8. Rom. 9. 11. 22. 23. 2 Thes. 2. 13, 14. 2 Tim. 2. 19, 20. ^k Mat. 20. 28. ¹ John. 10. 10, 11. Rom. 14. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 5. 15, 21. ¹ Ch. 4, 10, 18. Jude, 20. 1 Cor. 14. 26. Rom. 14. 19. ^{*} Or *exhort.* ^m 1 Cor. 16. 18. Phil. 2. 20. Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 11, 14. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18. Heb. 13. 7, 17. ⁿ 1 Cor. 4. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 20. Mat. 10. 40. Gal. 4. 14. ^o John, 14. 27. Mark, 9. 50. Rom. 14. 19. 2 Cor. 13. 14. [†] Or *beseech.*

skulking about in the night, like birds of prey, or like bats and moles, whose eyes cannot bear the light, Job. xxiv. 13—18. Matth. viii. 12. On the other hand, good men fear not the light, as their deeds will bear examination. This was the state from which the converts among the idolatrous Gentiles had happily and most remarkably emerged. See Rom. xiii. 12—14. Ephes. v. 7, 8. Col. i. 12, 13.

Ver. 8. Putting on the breastplates of faith and love, &c.] The breast and head being particularly exposed in battle, and wounds in these parts being extremely dangerous, the ancients carefully defended the breast and the head of their soldiers by armour, to which the Apostle here compares the Christian graces of *faith and love*. The breastplate of faith and love, being made of more precious materials than any metal, and being of a truly heavenly fabric, will render the heart, the seat of the affections, invulnerable. The Apostle's meaning, stripped of the metaphor, is this; that to defend our affections against the impression of outward and sensible objects, nothing is so effectual as faith in the promises of Christ, and love to God and man. St. Paul had the skilful and happy address of using figures and similitudes, which would be well understood, nay, and be emphatical, in the country and among the persons to whom he was writing. Thus, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, he compares holiness and sin to two masters, who had each of them their *slaves*; and dwells for some time upon that custom, which was so common among the Romans, in order to their apprehending his meaning more clearly. In writing to the *Ephesians*, he uses the architect style, ch. ii. 20—22. as all Asia had such sublime thoughts of the celebrated temple of Diana at *Ephesus*. In writing to the *Hebrew Christians*, he compares Christianity to almost the whole Mosaic œconomy, and shews how much the gospel-dispensation excels: so here, in writing to the *Thessalonians of Macedonia*, he speaks the very language of that warlike people; and as the lesser Asia was so well acquainted with the like customs, he makes use of the same allusion, Ephes. vi. 10—18. See the notes there.

Ver. 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath.] The primary design of God in sending his Son into this world,

was *not to condemn the world*, but to *save it*. He did not reveal the gospel that men might sin with the greater aggravation, and so be punished the more; but the motive was *love*, and the design was *mercy*: and he hath appointed none to wrath, but such as wilfully and obstinately refuse to believe and obey the gospel.

Ver. 10. Who died for us,] The Apostles lay a great stress upon this,—that Christ not only was incarnate, but died also to save the penitent, believing, and obedient; and therefore he has a just claim to our love and obedience. See Rom. v. 6—12. xiv. 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Whether we wake or sleep*, means, *Whether we live or die*; “Whether we be of the number of those who depart this life before the coming of Christ; or of those who survive till that time.” The Apostle refers to what he had said, ch. iv. 13, &c.

Ver. 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together,] He had used this expression ch. iv. 18. All that he has said since, concerning the time of Christ's coming, and the necessity of preparing for it, is to be looked upon as a parenthesis, or digression, though an exceedingly proper and useful one: and here, by his using this expression again, he shews that he is returning to where he left off, and closing this part of his Epistle.

*Ver. 12. In a church which had been so lately planted, and that in the midst of so much confusion and opposition, it is no wonder that there should be several disorders. Among other things, many of them did not behave themselves with a proper deference and respect to such as presided over them as a church, instructing, directing, and admonishing them; and particularly they seem to have refused a compliance with such of their directions as concerned the regulating of their public worship. The Apostle, therefore, exhorts them to a due regard to these, in ver. 12, 13. after which he concludes his epistle with practical directions; some of them suited only to a church where many of them had extraordinary spiritual gifts, though other of the directions are suited to all Christians. Dr. Heylin reads the latter part of this verse, *Who labour in the ministry, who preside over you in the Lord, and instruct you.* See Heb. xiii. 17.*

Ver. 14. Them that are unruly,] Dr. Heylin, with the

warn them that are * unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

15 ¹ See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ¹ ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

16 ¹ Rejoice evermore.

17 ¹ Pray without ceasing.

18 ¹ In every thing give thanks: for this

is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 ¹ Quench not the Spirit.

20 ¹ Despise not prophesyings.

21 ² Prove all things; ² hold fast that which is good.

22 ¹ Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23 And the very ¹ God of peace ¹ sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* ¹ your whole

¹ Rom. 14. 1. & 15. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 6. 6. Gal. 6. 1, 2. Eph. 4. 2. Col. 3. 12—16. & 1. 28. 2 Thess. 3. 11, 12. Heb. 12. 12. ² Or disorderly. ³ Lev. 19. 18. Prov. 17. 13. & 20. 21. & 24. 29. Mat. 5. 43, 39, 44. Rom. 12. 17—21. 1 Cor. 6. 7. 1 Pet. 3. 9. & 2. 21, 23. Gal. 6. 10. Ch. 3. 12. Phil. 4. 8. Heb. 13. 16, 18. Mat. 5. 12. Luke, 10. 20. Rom. 12. 12. 2 Cor. 2. 14. & 6. 10. Phil. 2. 18. & 3. 1. & 4. 4. 1 Pet. 4. 13. James, 1. 2. Rom. 5. 2, 11. Pl. 149. 1, 2. Luke, 13. 1—7. & 21. 36. Rom. 12. 12. Acts, 10. 2. & 12. 5. Eph. 6. 18. Col. 4. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 3. with Exod. 30. 8. Eph. 5. 4, 20. Col. 3. 15, 17. Heb. 13. 15. Job. 1. 21. Pl. 34. 1. 1 Cor. 12. 3—13. Eph. 4. 30. 1 Tim. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 6. 1 Cor. 14. 1, 39. 1 Cor. 2. 11, 15. & 11. 2. & 12. 10. & 14. 20. 1 John, 4. 1. 1f. 8. 20. Acts, 17. 11. 2 Thess. 2. 15. Rev. 3. 11. Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 23. Phil. 1. 27. & 3. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Exod. 23. 7. Eph. 5. 7, 11. Pl. 1. 1. & 16. 4. Jude, 23. Phil. 4. 8. Rom. 13. 13. Ch. 4. 12. Rom. 15. 13. & 16. 20. 1 Cor. 14. 33. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 4. 9. Heb. 13. 20. 2 Thess. 3. 16. Lev. 20. 3. John, 17. 17. 1 Cor. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 6, 10. Col. 1. 22. Ch. 3. 13. Eph. 5. 26, 27. Jude, 24.

the margin of our Bibles, renders the original ἀτάκτους, by disorderly. It is a military term, expressing the character of soldiers, who keep not their ranks, and will not know their colours.

Ver. 16. Rejoice evermore.] “Be always rejoicing in the midst of your trials and afflictions, knowing that you may have always the reconciled and approving presence of your God and Saviour, from which you may continually derive unutterable satisfaction and delight, sufficient to support you under all your sufferings.”

Ver. 17. Pray without ceasing.] “And, in order to maintain and improve this holy joy, pray incessantly. Be constant in your stated devotions at their returning seasons, and endeavour to keep your minds habitually prepared for those pious ejaculations which have so happy a tendency to promote the Christian temper.” See Luke, xviii. 1. xxiv. 53. Acts, ii. 46, 47.

Ver. 19. Quench not the Spirit.] This has generally been expounded as referring to the gifts of the Spirit; the exercise of which in themselves or others, should not be hindered. See 1 Tim. iv. 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 39. The phrase here used, σβέννυε, quench, or extinguish, according to some, has a reference to the descent of the Spirit, as in flames of fire; as may also the original word ἀνελώνω, 2 Tim. i. 6. The extensive meaning of the words may be thus expressed: “Extinguish not spiritual gifts in others, by preventing them from the exercise of them in the solemn assembly; nor extinguish them in yourselves, by pride, idleness, absenting from the solemn assembly, or by the disorderly exercise of them there; much less by wickedness or apostacy. No, rather stir up the gifts which were given you by the laying on of my hands: allow others in their turns to exercise their gifts; and, by reading, meditation, prayer, and praise, by frequenting the solemn assembly, and by such an use of your spiritual gifts there, as may turn most to the edification of others, together with a steady perseverance in faith and love, and a holy-Christian conversation;—by these means stir up and improve your spiritual gifts, until that holy religion, which they attest, through the power of Divine grace, entirely purify your hearts and lives, and blaze so bright, as to give light to all around you.”

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Ver. 20. Despise not prophesyings.] By prophesying, here, we are not to understand barely a foretelling of future events, but a preaching by immediate inspiration; that is, speaking what tended to instruct or establish, convert or confirm, reprove or comfort mankind, in matters relating either to faith or practice. See 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4. If we had only this one of all St. Paul’s epistles, we should not perhaps have been able to understand the reason and design of this short direction; though the Thessalonians might easily understand it, from their thorough knowledge of the state of their own church: but in writing to other churches, which probably were more guilty of the same fault, he has opened his mind more fully. He evidently refers to the contentions about the exercise of spiritual gifts, Rom. xii. 3—8. and yet more evidently, 1 Cor. xii. xiii. xiv. where he treats of this subject at large; shewing them that prophesying was the most valuable of all the spiritual gifts that were among them, as conducing most to edification. See the notes there.

Ver. 21, 22. Prove all things, &c.] Though they were not to despise prophesyings, yet they were not to receive every thing which might be so called; but to prove and examine all things that went under that name. Nor were they to stop here; but when they had separated them, or could distinguish between them, they were to reject the evil and hold fast the good. These two verses and the preceding verse ought to have been joined together, and then the connection would have been more evident. This direction was given, not only to such as presided among them, but to all the Christians at Thessalonica in general. Comp. 1 John, iv. 1.

Ver. 23. And the very God of peace, &c.] “And may that God himself, who is reconciled to you by the blood of Christ, and is the author, giver, and approver of peace with another, and in your own consciences, and of all manner of prosperity; may he thoroughly purge your whole person from all iniquity, and make you eminently partakers of his holiness.” I would translate the original ὁλοκλήρον ὑμῶν, your whole person, because the word signifies the whole of a thing given by lot, consequently the whole of any thing; and here the whole frame of our nature, our whole person. Accordingly, Dr. Chandler has shewed,

4 A that

spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 ^f Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

25 ^g Brethren, pray for us.

26 ^h Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.
27 I ^{*} charge you by the Lord ⁱ that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

28 ^k The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

^f 1 Cor. 1. 9. & 10. 13. 2 Theff. 3. 3. Titus, 1. 2. Heb. 6. 17, 18. Numb. 23. 19. ^g Col. 4. 3. 2 Theff. 3. 1. Rom. 15. 30. Eph. 6. 19, 20. ^h Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 2 Cor. 13. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 14. ⁱ Or adjure. ^j Col. 4. 16. ^k Rom. 16. 20, 24. 1 Cor. 16. 23. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Gal. 6. 18. Eph. 6. 24. Phil. 4. 23. 2 Theff. 5. 18. Heb. 13. 25. Rev. 22. 21.

that this word is applied to a city, whose buildings are all standing; and to an empire, which has all its provinces; and to an army, whose troops are undiminished by any accident or calamity.

Your whole spirit, and soul, and body,] The Pythagoreans, Platonists, and Stoics, divided the immaterial part of man into *spirit and soul*; an opinion which they seem to have derived from the most antient tradition, founded, perhaps, on the Mosaic account of the formation of man, Gen. ii. 7. where it is said, that *God formed man, his body, of the dust of the earth, and breathed into man the breath of life, or lives; and, by means of this union, man became a living soul, partaker of a sensitive, as well as of a rational life.* In short, the apostle's prayer does at least include this,—That they might be thoroughly sanctified, of how many constituent parts soever their nature consisted. Dr. Heylin has it, *May every part of you, your spirit, &c.*

Ver. 27. I charge you by the Lord, &c.] This was in the nature of a solemn oath, which the apostle upon occasion used himself, and by which he here obliges the Thessalonians. See Josh. vi. 26. Matth. xxvi. 63, 64. St. Paul was not for having the scripture locked up from the common people, nor did he recommend it to them, first of all, to read a system of divinity, drawn up by uninspired and fallible men. See Col. iv. 16. How easy was it for the primitive Christians to distinguish St. Paul's genuine epistles from any counterfeit ones, when he sent them to the several churches by approved persons, and commonly by some of his own companions and attendants, when he ordered them to be read publicly upon the receipt of them, and took care to affix his name, written in some peculiar distinguishing manner, or with some very particular mark annexed to it: and if the fact was once ascertained, how easy was it to transmit it to posterity! See Philem. ver. 19.

Inferences. Since we continually see so many around us suddenly surpris'd into the eternal world, and fixed in that state in which judgment will find them, it should render us very careful that *the day of the Lord may not overtake us as a thief*, but that we maintain a continual watch. How many are at this hour speaking *peace and safety* to themselves, over whose heads instantaneous *destruction* is hovering; such a destruction, as they shall never be able to escape, never able to recover from, if once it overtake them!

Let us endeavour, through grace, to awaken ourselves and each other to a due sense of these things. Are we indeed *children of the day*? Let us then rouse ourselves, and use the *light*; that by it we may dispatch our labours, and, favoured by it, be guarded against the most sudden attacks of our spiritual enemies. Let us be *sober and vigi-*

lant, lest our adversary, the devil, break in upon us by surprise; which the unexpected weapons wherewith he attacks us, may render yet more dangerous.

Our armour is described, and provided, if we seek it from the magazine of God. Let *faith and love* ever defend our *breast*; let the *hope of salvation* cover our head. Let us adore the divine clemency and mercy, and enjoy the views of that salvation which is to be obtained by Jesus Christ. As he hath done *his part* to procure it for us, having *died* for this important purpose, be it our care to exert ourselves in our proper sphere for securing it, that *we may lay hold on eternal life*: then may we be happily indifferent to life or to death. While we continue in the body;—and when that is sleeping in the grave, and our souls remain in the invisible world;—and when our sleeping dust shall be roused, and both soul and body live in unremitting vigour and energy, beyond the need of that repose which is now so necessary;—still, in each of these different states, the faithful *shall live with him*; and he will make the progression of the soul from one state of *being* to another, its progression to stages of increasing goodness and joy. In the persuasion of this, let us *comfort, exhort, and edify each other*; and we shall feel the energy of the exhortations we give, and the sweetness of the consolations we administer.

What a variety of excellent instructions does the short close of this chapter contain! yea, how much is expressed in some of its shortest sentences,—on this habitual *joy in God*,—this constant *disposition to prayer*,—this *grateful temper* which, upon every call, overflows in *thanksgiving*,—this *abstinence from all appearance of evil*! “Blessed Father of mercies, we need a better Spirit than our own, to teach us these things! May *thy grace be with us*, and may none of us *quench thy Spirit*, nor *despise those ordinances* which, by his heavenly communications, he so often vouchsafes to own! O may we endeavour, by the daily importunity of prayer, to engage more of his efficacious and purifying influences, to *sanctify the whole frame* of our nature, our *spirits, and souls, and bodies*; so shall we understand and choose, so shall we love and delight in things divine, and maintain that constant command over our appetites of flesh and blood, as to be continually fit for the *appearance* of thy dear Son, and more like what we hope we shall be, when presented *before the presence of his glory*.”

To promote this, let us *watch over each other* in the Lord: may Christian societies preserve a regular discipline, with a due mixture of zeal and tenderness: may the friendship of private persons be rendered mutually subservient to religious improvement; and a due regard be ever paid to those who *labour among them, and preside over them in the Lord*.

Lord. They will not require a blind submission to their dictates, if they rightly understand the gospel which they are to teach: they will allow, they will encourage, they will urge their hearers to *prove all things*; which even the apostles themselves, with all their plenitude of inspiration, did not think it beneath them to do. But they who thus candidly inquire, and are determined to *hold fast what is truly good*,—knowing how excellent an office the *ministry* is; knowing how much the edification of the church depends upon it; will esteem those who bear it, *very highly in love, for their work's sake*; and, in whatever instances they may be constrained by what they judge to be the evidence of truth, to differ from their brethren, or even from their teachers,—will be solicitous to maintain harmony and love in the society to which they belong, as it becomes *them* to do who are the disciples of that *wisdom from above*, which hath taught them inseparably to connect their regards to *purity and peace*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Having mentioned the second advent of the Lord Jesus, the apostle bids them prepare for it.

1. Respecting the precise time of his coming, it is left in an awful uncertainty, that we might be always ready, *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night*, so suddenly and unexpectedly. *Note*; It is a needless curiosity to desire precisely to know the hour of Christ's coming; but a most needful piece of wisdom to be always ready for his appearing.

2. His coming will be the terror and surprise of an ungodly world. *For when they, who are secure in their sins, shall say, Peace and safety, promising themselves long years of sinful pleasures and indulgences, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.* *Note*; When the day of the Lord comes, it will spread a terrible alarm through a world that lieth in wickedness; and then the ungodly and the sinner will in vain cry to rocks and mountains to cover their guilty heads.

3. This will be a day of light and triumph to the faithful people of God. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, sleeping in sinful and sensual security, but brought into the marvellous light of the gospel; and therefore need not terrify yourselves that that day should overtake you as a thief, though you must be prepared. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day, walking under the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness: we are not of the night, nor of darkness, in heathen ignorance, and under the blindness of the natural mind; but tread the shining path of truth, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of man.* *Note*; It is an unspeakable blessing to be delivered from the darkness of the fallen heart, and, walking in the light of life, to have ever in our view the bright crown of righteousness which fadeth not away. Then we can say, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

2dly, On the foregoing considerations the apostle grounds his exhortations to the practice of several necessary duties.

1. *Therefore let us not sleep as do others, in carelessness about these eternal concerns, trifling away the precious moment of opportunity; but let us watch and pray, awake to the great affairs of our immortal souls, ever listening when the sound Behold he cometh, Go ye out to meet him, shall*

reach our ears. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. *And,*

2. *Be sober, temperate in the use of all God's creatures, neither overcharged with surfeiting or drunkenness, nor with the cares or pleasures of this life. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night, and seek the darkness to hide their guilty heads, stupifying their consciences till the dreadful hour shall startle them into sensibility. But let us who are of the day, and walk in the light of truth, be sober and vigilant, not intoxicated with any earthly pursuits or enjoyments, but seeking in the first place the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*

3. We must be armed, as well as on our guard; *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation*; these being the cardinal graces, by which the soul, like a warrior completely clad in armour, is able to resist every attack of the enemy, unhurt amidst all the fiery darts which sin and Satan can hurl against it. *Note*; (1.) We have mighty foes to grapple with, and need be well armed against them. (2.) Where faith is grounded on Christ, love in lively exercise, and hope with piercing eye looking up to eternal things, then none of our enemies can hurt us, nor will any of the snares of this world be able to prevail to draw our affections off from God and the things which are above.

4. He encourages them, from past experience, with confidence still to trust on the Lord. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but, as is evident from his grace which we have already received, wills and entreats us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, to purchase for us pardon, and for all his faithful saints eternal redemption; that, whether we wake or sleep, are numbered among the living or among the dead—at the day of his appearing, we should live together with him in glory everlasting. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and exhort or edify one another, even as also ye do; nothing affording such animating ground of hope, and serving to quicken the soul in all holy walking before God, as these blessed prospects and expectations.* *Note*; (1.) The more we are enabled to exercise confidence in Christ, the more steadily shall we bear up under all opposition. (2.) Christians should delight in exhorting, comforting, and edifying one another; and nothing can afford them more abundant matter than the expected coming of their Lord.

3dly, The apostle passes on to other needful exhortations.

1. He enjoins them to respect and honour their ministers. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, presiding in your worshipping assemblies, and admonish and instruct you in the good ways of the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.* *Note*; (1.) The duty of ministers is to labour with zeal and diligence for the good of their people's souls, to be over them, watching for their good, as the shepherd tends his flock, with a constant eye to the great Shepherd who hath committed his trust to them; and to admonish them publicly and privately, without partiality, instructing them in all God's holy will. (2.) The duty of the people to their ministers is to love them, to esteem them highly for their work's sake, to know and to acknowledge them, with thankfulness for their labours, and serious attention to their advice.

2. He exhorts them to the discharge of those duties, which, as Christians, they owed each other.

(1.) *Be at peace among yourselves*, cultivating that mutual harmony and love with each other, and your ministers, which, as a church, will most especially tend to your establishment.

(2.) *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly*, reprove them for their disorderly walk, and threaten them with the church's censures if they amend not their ways; *comfort the feeble-minded*, whose hearts are ready to sink under their trials, and are dejected with temptation or affliction, encourage them to bear up, and suggest every reviving motive to cheer their drooping spirits; *support the weak*, whose attainments are low in grace and knowledge, and are therefore more easily offended; we should therefore bear with their infirmities, and endeavour to strengthen their faith; *be patient toward all men*, put up with every affront or provocation, forbearing and forgiving one another in love, and still waiting and hoping for their amendment.

(3.) *See that none render evil for evil unto any man*, in look, in word, or deed; *but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men*; do good to their bodies and souls, and be ready to every work and labour of love.

4thly, *We have divers short and weighty exhortations.*

1. *Rejoice evermore in God as your portion*, in Christ as your Redeemer, in the Spirit as your Comforter; in one another, in all holy ordinances, and under every tribulation.

2. *Pray without ceasing*; be daily and often employed in this blessed work, in private, in your families, or among the faithful, and in ejaculatory and mental prayer. *Note*; To live without prayer, is the sure proof of an unregenerate heart.

3. *In every thing give thanks*, under every dispensation of Providence, not only for mercies received, but also under every affliction, maintaining still a cheerful spirit: *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*, and the constant, grateful return we owe for the rich redemption which we have obtained in his dear Son.

4. *Quench not the Spirit*, by indulging any evil temper in your heart, or allowed sin in your conduct; by resisting his gracious motions, or neglecting those means of grace wherein his divine influences are communicated to you. (See the annotations.)

5. *Despise not prophesings, or prophecies*, which still con-

tain most useful matter, and should be constantly read and regarded; and attend upon the ministrations of the word. See the annotations for other views of this text.

6. *Prove all things*, and try, by the gospel test, every doctrine which is advanced, that you may not be a prey to deceivers: *hold fast that which is good*, unmoved by seducers among yourselves, or the persecutions of your enemies from without.

7. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*, dreading sin in its most distant approaches, and avoiding whatever may have a tendency to lead you into evil, under however innocent a guise it may present itself to you.

5thly, The apostle concludes,

1. With his prayers for them. *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly*; may he, who is the author and giver of peace to your consciences, and who unites you together in this happy bond, may he cleanse you from all iniquity, and perfect you in holiness: *and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, in every member and every faculty, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* *Note*; Prayer is one of the great means of sanctification.

2. He expresses his confidence in God's promises and protection. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*; he never hath failed, never can fail, those that continue to trust him.

3. He entreats an interest in their prayers. *Brethren, pray for us.* The greatest ministers need the prayers of all their people; and the more they are mindful of them at a throne of grace, the more good will they receive from their ministrations.

4. He adds his salutation. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.* Let every member of the church be assured of my most cordial and affectionate regards.

5. He adjures them solemnly to read this epistle to the whole church. *I charge you by the Lord, in his name, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.* *Note*; (1.) All Christians are bound to read the scriptures diligently; nor can there be a stronger mark of Antichrist, than the keeping these sacred records sealed up in an unknown tongue. (2.) That public worship is very defective, where the scriptures are not read in the congregation.

6. He closes with his usual benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* May the boundless and everlasting favour of the adored Jesus be your portion now and for ever. *Amen!*

THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

P R E F A C E.

DURING St. Paul's abode at Corinth, where he wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians soon after his arrival from Athens, Acts, xviii. 1. he was informed that this church, which from its first rise was cruelly persecuted, had been attacked in another and more dangerous quarter; namely, by innovations in religion, doctrines skilfully sown in the church by the devil. One of these which had found most easy admittance into the minds of the Thessalonians, and which St. Paul has more particularly opposed in this Epistle, was, that the day of judgment was very near at hand; and, whether it was in reference to what St. Paul had written on this subject to the Thessalonians in his First Epistle towards the end of the fourth chapter, or that he was supposed to have written any thing else on the same subject, this vain imagination was made to pass in the church under his name, as if it proceeded from his authority. The apostle here defends himself with all his power; Ch. ii. 1, 2. and thence taking occasion to discourse with the Thessalonians on a subject, with which only those to whom God was pleased to reveal himself, could be acquainted, he mentions to them an important event as yet concealed in the prescience of God, but which should be fulfilled in the church in the course of ages, and therefore must long precede the last coming of Christ. This great event St. Paul calls the mystery of iniquity, Ch. ii. 7. and describes it so clearly, and accompanied with so many particular circumstances; that we must either be spiritually blind, now that most of those things are fulfilled, if we do not understand of whom the apostle speaks; or illiberal and dishonest, if we do not acknowledge that the man who possesses all the features which St. Paul has delineated in his prediction, is really the person whom he calls that man of sin, Ch. ii. 3. If we see a man elevated to the highest dignity that subsists in the world; who has only risen to this height of power and glory by degrees, and by imperceptible means; without arms, and without victories; whose throne is fixed neither among the Heathen, nor among the Mahometans, but in the church itself; who assumes divine authority, sitting in the temple as God, ver. 4. as his lieutenant and vicar; and by these titles receiving such respect and homage as the church never paid to any man: if we behold those to whom the scripture says Ye are Gods, and whom the ignorance and flattery of the people have frequently converted into divinities, namely, kings and emperors, bow the knee before him, and submit to his greatness; if, lastly, the power and authority of this domination has been strengthened from age to age by pretended miracles and lying wonders, ver. 9. if, after all this, any one should still be at a loss to know who is this man, where he holds his seat of empire, and who are the people in subjection to him, it must arise from a depth of ignorance, or from a height of obstinacy,

obstinacy, which can only be accounted for from what the apostle calls the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, ver. 10. St. Paul then passes a censure on certain disorderly and idle persons who dwelt at Thessalonica, Ch. iii. 6—13. and, by his manner of doing it, clearly shews what we cannot have too much on our minds, that laziness, unruly passions, and an idle and malicious curiosity, are generally found together; and he commands ministers of the gospel not to overlook or excuse these things: ver. 14.

CHAP. I.

St. Paul certifieth them of the good opinion which he had of their faith, love, and patience; and therewithal useth divers reasons for the comforting them in persecution; whereof the chief is taken from the righteous judgment of God.

[Anno Domini 52.]

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,
unto the church of the Thessalonians in

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2^b Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

3^c We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

^a See 1 Thess. i. 1. Acts, 13. 9. & 15. 22. & 16. 1. & 17. 1—10. John, 14. 23. & 17. 21—23. 1 John, i. 3. & 4. 8, 16. ^b Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. 1 Thess. i. 1. 1 Peter. i. 2. Jude. 2. ^c Rom. i. 8. 1 Cor. i. 4. Eph. i. 4, 15, 16. Phil. i. 3—7. Col. i. 3—6. 1 Thess. i. 2, 3. & 3. 6, 7. & 4. 9. Ch. 2. 13. Mat. 13. 23. Pl. 84. 7. Prov. 4. 18. Is. 40. 29—31. 2 Pet. i. 4—8. & 3. 13. Ch. 5. 5. Job, 17. 9.

CHAP. I.

It seems, the messenger who carried the apostle's first letter to the Thessalonians had informed him, that they were exceedingly strengthened by it, and bare the persecution, which still continued as violent as ever, with admirable constancy. This good news was so acceptable to St. Paul and his assistants, that they began their second letter with telling the Thessalonians, that they thought themselves bound to return thanks to God for their increasing faith and love, ver. 3.—And that they gloried to other churches in their faith and patience in all the persecutions which they endured, ver. 4. (probably the churches of Achaia,) in expectation, no doubt, that their example would have a happy influence on those churches, in leading them to exercise the like faith and patience under sufferings.—And, for the encouragement of the suffering Thessalonians, the apostle observed, that their behaviour under persecution demonstrated God's righteousness in having called them, notwithstanding they were of the Gentile race, into the gospel dispensation, ver. 5.—Yet it was just in God to punish their Jewish persecutors, by sending tribulation upon them, ver. 6.—but he would bestow on the faithful among the Thessalonians, a share in his rest, along with the faithful among the Jews, when Christ will return from heaven with his mighty angels, ver. 7.—to punish all who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of his Son, ver. 8.—with everlasting destruction, ver. 9.—The apostle adds, that, at the judgment of the world, Christ will be glorified by the ministry of the angels, who shall put his sentences in execution; and be admired by all his faithful people, and, among the rest, by the faithful Thessalonians; ver. 10.—

And in this persuasion he always prayed that God would judge them worthy of the gospel, whereby they were called to eternal life; and also perfect in them the work of faith with power, ver. 11.—That, on the one hand, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified through them, by their persevering in the faith of the gospel, even when persecuted; and, on the other, that they might be glorified through him, by the graces and virtues which they were enabled to exercise, in a degree proportioned to the grace of God bestowed upon them; for these graces and virtues would excite in the minds of their persecutors, the highest admiration of their character, ver. 12.

II. T H E S S A L O N I A N S.] It is probable that this epistle was written from the same place with, and not long after, the first. This seems the more likely, as Timothy, and Silvanus, or Silas, are mentioned as being still with them. The general design of this epistle, like the former, was to establish the Thessalonians in the faith of the gospel; to comfort them under the sufferings to which they were exposed; to rectify some mistakes into which they had fallen, concerning the general resurrection and final judgment,—from Ch. iv. 13, &c. of the former epistle; and to direct them in the exercise of salutary discipline to some, who had been guilty of great irregularities in the church. Though this is the shortest of all St. Paul's epistles to the churches, it is not inferior to any of them in sublimity of sentiment, or warmth of expression. The remarkable prophecy of *the man of sin*, as explained in the course of our notes, will be found a strong and undeniable argument of the reality of the apostle's inspiration.

Ver. 3. *We are bound to thank God, &c.*] From this verse to the end of the chapter, the apostle repeats the substance and main design of the first epistle; which was,

4 So that we ourselves ^a glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure :

5 ^c Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted ^d worthy of the kingdom of God, ^e for which ye also suffer :

6 ^f Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ;

7 And to you who are troubled ^g rest with us, when the Lord Jesus ^h shall be revealed

from heaven with ⁱ his mighty angels,

8 ^j In flaming fire ^k taking vengeance on them that ^l know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ :

9 ^m Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ;

10 When he shall come ⁿ to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you ^o was believed) in that day.

11 Wherefore also ^p we pray always for you, that our God would ^q count you ^r worthy

^a 2 Cor. 1. 14. & 9. 2. 1 Thess. 2. 19, 14, 19. & 1. 3, 16. & 3. 4, 7. 1. 10, 12, 22. 1 Thess. 5. 23. Rev. 3. 4. Ver. 11. ^b 1 Thess. 2. 14. Acts, 14. 22. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. John, 16. 33. ^c 6. 10. & 16. 5-7. & 19. 2. & 18. 20. Deut. 32. 43. Zech. 2. 8. ^d Mat. 5. 11. & 25. 34. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. & 5. 10. Heb. 4. 9. Luke, 16. 25. ^e 1 Thess. 4. 16. Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. Jude, 14. Rev. 20. 11, 12. ^f Gr. the angels of his power. ^g 1 Pf. 50. 3. Deut. 32. 22. Nah. 1. 2, 6. Rom. 2. 8, 9. 2 Peter, 3. 7, 10, 12. Jude, 15. Rev. 1. 7. ^h Or yielding. ⁱ 11. Hof. 4. 6. Pf. 92. 6, 7, 9. 1 Thess. 5. 5. Eph. 2. 12. Gal. 4. 8. Prov. 29. 18. John, 3. 18, 36. Heb. 2. 3. & 10. 29. & 12. 25, 29. Rom. 16. 35. 14. & 2. 19. & 66. 24. Mark, 9. 43-48. Rom. 2. 8, 9. Jude, 6. ^j Pf. 79. 6. Mat. 25. 41, 46. & 3. 12. & 13. 41, 42, 49, 50. ^k Acts, 1. 11. & 3. 19, 20. ^l 1 Thess. 1. 10. & 4. 16. 1 Cor. 2. 9. ^m Ch. 7. ⁿ 7. Rev. 14. 10, 11. & 20. 10, 14, 15. ^o Acts, 1. 11. & 3. 19, 20. ^p 1 Thess. 1. 2. & 3. 10. ^q 1 Thess. 5. 23. 1 Peter, 1. 3-7. 2 Peter, 1. 2. ^r Or vouchsafe.

^s Phil. 1. 28. 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18. Ver. 6. ^t Eph. 4. 1, 13. Col. ^u Acts, 14. 22. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. John, 16. 33. ^v Rev. 1. 7. ^w Or yielding. ^x 11. Hof. 4. 6. Pf. 92. 6, 7, 9. 1 Thess. 5. 5. Eph. 2. 12. Gal. 4. 8. Prov. 29. 18. John, 3. 18, 36. Heb. 2. 3. & 10. 29. & 12. 25, 29. Rom. 16. 35. 14. & 2. 19. & 66. 24. Mark, 9. 43-48. Rom. 2. 8, 9. Jude, 6. ^y Pf. 79. 6. Mat. 25. 41, 46. & 3. 12. & 13. 41, 42, 49, 50. ^z Acts, 1. 11. & 3. 19, 20. ^{aa} 1 Thess. 1. 10. & 4. 16. 1 Cor. 2. 9. ^{ab} Ch. 7. ^{ac} 7. Rev. 14. 10, 11. & 20. 10, 14, 15. ^{ad} Acts, 1. 11. & 3. 19, 20. ^{ae} 1 Thess. 1. 2. & 3. 10. ^{af} 1 Thess. 5. 23. 1 Peter, 1. 3-7. 2 Peter, 1. 2. ^{ag} Or vouchsafe.

to confirm them in Christianity, and in their patient suffering for it : and the great argument which he here makes use of is, that the Lord Jesus Christ would come as an universal judge, and that then he would punish the impudent, and make the faithful happy, for ever. The Christians at Thessalonica seem to have been remarkable for their patience and steadfastness, as well as for their mutual love and affection. See ver. 4, 5. 1 Thess. i. 3, 6-10. ii. 14. iv. 9, 10.

Ver. 4. *So that we ourselves glory*] Compare ver. 11. with this verse, and you will find, that here is an instance of his commending them, according to his frequent way of writing, in order to encourage and more effectually persuade them still to be advancing. From this text it is worth while to observe the apostle's skilful and happy address : he raised the emulation of other churches, by commending the Thessalonians ; and he again quickens the Thessalonians, by acquainting them how much he had praised them in other churches.

Ver. 5. *Which is a manifest token*] The exercise of God's justice has a double object ; respecting good men for their purification, and respecting bad men for their punishment. Persecution inflicted and suffered, furnishes both these objects respectively. Perhaps the word rendered *manifest token*, may further imply, that the sufferings of good men, and the triumphs of their persecuting enemies, should not only terminate in a display of divine vengeance ; but that these seeming irregularities do even now declare, that there shall be such a day of retribution.

Ver. 6, 7. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, &c.*] His justice is equally concerned to afflict those in their turns who have afflicted you ; ver. 7. and to grant to you who have been afflicted, repose with us, &c. Heylin. With his mighty angels, should be joined to the next clause ;—his mighty

angels in flaming fire ; or, " who will make a flaming fire ;" as Pf. civ. 3, 4.

Ver. 9. *From the presence of the Lord,*] This phrase expresses not only that they shall be expelled from that joy and glory which reigns in the presence of Christ, but that his presence shall appear active in the infliction of their punishment ; so that they shall as it were be blasted by the lightning of his eye. The original is very emphatical : " Who shall suffer punishment,—everlasting destruction " from the face of the Lord." *From the glory of his power means, from his glorious power.*

Ver. 10. *To be admired, &c.*] This strongly implies not only that the saints themselves shall admire at what he does for them, so far above all their conceptions and expectations ; but that it shall reflect an admirable glory upon our Redeemer, in the judgment of all who shall be spectators of it. Elsner and Grotius read the next clause, *Because our testimony concerning you will be approved in that day ; or shall have been verified, or ratified upon you.* Dr. Heylin reads it, *For what we have testified and declared to you, shall be verified in that day.*

Ver. 11. *That our God would count you worthy*] *Would make, or render you worthy, &c.* Heylin and Doddridge. Instead of *the good pleasure of his goodness*, Blackwall would render the original *εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης* the *benevolence of his goodness* ; and observes, that it is the shortest and most charming representation any where to be found, of that infinite goodness which passes all expression, but was never so happily and properly expressed as here.

Inferences.—How solemn and august will Christ's appearance to judgment be at the last day ! How tremendous to sinners ! and how transporting to the saints ! he will then be visibly seen, as coming from heaven with awful majesty

of *this* calling, and fulfil all the 'good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the 'work of faith with power :

12^u That the name of our Lord Jesus

* Eph. 1. 4—12. & 2. 7, 8. Rom. 5. 20, 21. Tit. 3. 5—7. Zech. 4. 7. 1. 5, 5. * 1 Peter, 1. 7. & 4. 14. Ver. 10. John, 17. 20, 21—24, 26.

Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Eph. 1. 19, 20. 1 Thess. 2. 13. Col. 2. 12. John, 6. 29. 1 Thess.

majesty and surrounding hosts of angels; a flame of fire will go before him to devour his enemies; and he will execute righteous judgment in taking dreadful vengeance on those who have finally stifled the divine light under their respective dispensations, and especially on those who have rebelled against the clearer light of the gospel, and on all the persecutors of his church and people: they shall be banished from his blissful presence, and punished with immediate impressions of his Almighty power upon them to their everlasting destruction. But with what a different aspect, and to what better purposes will he, at the same time, manifest himself to his faithful saints, whose hearts have been purified by faith! he will come to be glorified and admired in them; and they shall be glorified in and with him, as members in union with him. Then the holy and blessed creation of God shall see to all eternity, from what ruin Jesus could raise, and to what felicity he could exalt, those who were once captives of Satan, slaves of sin, and heirs of death and hell! happy souls! who cordially embrace the divine testimony which is given in the gospel concerning him, and which shall be confirmed, with a glorious accomplishment of it to all the faithful, in the great day. What thanks will be eternally due to God on their behalf! and with what patience, faith, and hope, may we endure all tribulations which befall us here below, in view and prospect of this blessed day, when the righteous God will, according to his promise, and the merit of his Son, make rich amends to his saints for all their sufferings for him! May grace and peace be multiplied to them from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! May all the good pleasure of God's goodness, and the work of faith, be fulfilled in them with power, by perfecting all that concerns them, in order to their glorifying the name of Christ in this world, and their being glorified with him in the world to come, according to the riches of the Father and Son's grace, as revealed in the gospel.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle joins the same persons with himself in the inscription of this epistle as in the former. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. He expresses his thankfulness to God on their behalf. *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, and gratefully to acknowledge his blessings and mercies, especially those spiritual blessings, which he hath so richly bestowed upon you, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, in fuller discoveries of the gospel, and more unshaken confidence in the promises, as is evident in all the blessed fruits of grace and holiness which flourish among you; and the charity of every one of you all toward*

each other aboundeth, the sure proof of your faith unfeigned. Note; (1.) They, who are most advanced in grace, have still need to pray, Increase our faith. (2.) Where genuine faith is, every other grace must follow; for it worketh by love.

2. Their eminence in grace gave him occasion to boast of them to other churches. *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God; as for your other gifts and graces, so especially for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure, with holy intrepidity, unshaken perseverance, and calm submission, bearing up under every trial.*

3. The sufferings of the faithful people of God would soon end in eternal rest, and the authors of them suffer condign vengeance; *which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, who will soon make his impartial justice to appear; and even now it is your honour, and wisely ordered by him, that such tribulation should befall you, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer, conformed thus to your Head, and made meet to reign with him; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, who shall shortly feel the arm of an avenging judge; but to you who are troubled, rest with us, even the present rest in God, into which they who believe do now enter; and soon that eternal rest will come, which remaineth for the faithful people of God, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in all the pomp of tremendous majesty; in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether idolatrous Gentiles and unbelieving Jews, or impenitent sinners of every kind, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; driven into eternal banishment from his blissful abode, and suffering in body and soul the vengeance of eternal fire: when, in that happy day for his faithful people, he shall come to be glorified in his saints, whose salvation shall then be fully accomplished; and to be admired in all them that believe, being henceforward the subject of their everlasting adoration, love, and praise:—because our testimony among you was believed, and you will, if you perseveringly cleave to Christ, reap the blessed fruits of your faith in that great day. Note; (1.) There is a day at hand, when the persecutors and the persecuted will have impartial justice done them at the bar of God. (2.) The prospect of that tribunal should comfort us under all the unjust reproaches, revilings, and tribulations which we now endure. (3.) The appearing of the Lord will be terrible to the ungodly and the sinner, whose neglect of God and his gospel will then be avenged; when wrath to the uttermost shall overtake them, and, driven with confusion from the presence of*

C H A P. II.

He willeth them to continue steadfast in the truth received; sheweth that there will be a departure from the faith, and a discovery of Antichrist, before the day of the Lord come: and thereupon repeateth his former exhortation, and prayeth for them.

[Anno Domini 52.]

NOW ^a we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and

by our gathering together unto him,

² ^b That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

³ ^c Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come ^d a falling away first, and that ^e man of sin be revealed, the ^f son of perdition;

^a Rom. 12. 1. ² Cor. 10. 1. ³ Tim. 4. 1. ⁴ Tim. 6. 14. ⁵ 1 Cor. 1. 8. ⁶ 1 Thess. 3. 13. & 4. 16, 17. ⁷ Mat. 25. 31—34. & 21. 30, 31. ⁸ Jer. 23. 8. ⁹ Mat. 24. 4. ¹⁰ Col. 1. 24. & 2. 8, 13. ¹¹ Ch. 3. 14. ¹² 1 Pet. 2. 1. ¹³ 1 John. 4. 1. ¹⁴ Mal. 2. 11. ¹⁵ 1 Thess. 4. 15. ¹⁶ 1 Pet. 4. 7, 8. ¹⁷ Jer. 29. 8. ¹⁸ Eph. 5. 6. ¹⁹ Dan. 7. 8. 20—25. & 11. 36—39. ²⁰ 1 Tim. 2. 1—3. ²¹ 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. & 4. 3, 4. ²² 1 John. 2. 18. ²³ Rev. 9. 1—11. & 13. ²⁴ Ver. 8—10. ²⁵ 1 John. 2. 18. ²⁶ Rev. 13. 5, 6, 11, 12, 14. ²⁷ Dan. 7. 25. ²⁸ Rev. 9. 11. & 13. 10. & 17. 2, 6, 8. & 19. 20. ²⁹ John. 17. 18.

an angry Judge, the jaws of hell shall yawn to receive them; and, deep ingulphed in everlasting burnings, they shall sink, and never rise up again. (4.) Christ will be the eternal object of his faithful people's admiration; and while with wonder they trace from first to last the amazing dispensations of his grace, their hearts will glow with rapture, and their tongues be filled with never-ending praise.

2dly, In the prospect of this day the apostle redoubled his supplications for them. *Wherefore also we pray always for you:*

1. *That our God, in whose favour and love we have a glorious interest, would count you worthy of this calling; enabling you to walk as becomes your vocation, and bring you to the possession of the glory that he proposes to you; and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, carrying on and completing in you the salvation which he hath begun; and the work of faith with power, strengthening this radical grace, that all the rest may flourish with greater vigour.*

2. He prays, *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, by your exemplary conduct and conversation; and ye in him, as now united to him by faith, through the operations of his Holy Spirit; according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath bestowed it on you for this great end, that his glorious name might be for ever exalted, and all the praise of your salvation be ascribed to him alone, and you yourselves made meet for the inheritance of the saints.*

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TO excite the attention of the Thessalonian brethren to the things which the apostle was going to write concerning the time of Christ's second coming, and to give them the greater weight, he began this chapter with beseeching them, in relation to the coming of Christ to judge the world, and their gathering together around him in the air, of which he had written in his former letter, ver. 1.—not to be soon shaken from any honest purpose which they had formed concerning their worldly affairs, nor thrown into confusion, either by any pretended revelation of the Spirit obtruded upon them by false teachers, or by any verbal message as from him, or by any letter forged in his name, importing that he believed the day of judgment was at hand, ver. 2.—And, to remove the impression which had been made on the minds of the Thessalonians by these

base arts, the apostle assured them in the most express terms, that the day of the Lord shall not come, till there first happen a great apostacy in religion among the disciples of Christ, and the man of sin be revealed; that is, till a tyrannical power should arise in the church, which should exceedingly corrupt the doctrine of Christ, and grievously oppress his faithful servants, ver. 3.—Next, he described the character and actions of that tyrannical power, and insinuated, that it would continue a long time in the church, openly opposing God, ver. 4.—Then he asked them, if they did not remember that when he was with them, he told them these things? ver. 5.—and that there was a power then existing, which restrained the man of sin from revealing himself, ver. 6.—and would restrain him, till it was taken out of the way, ver. 7.—Which things, if they had recollected them, were proofs sufficient that he did not think the day of Christ was at hand. In the mean time, lest the prospect of such great evils arising in the church, might afflict the Thessalonians too much, the apostle added, that, after the man of sin is revealed in his season, and has continued during the season allotted to him, he shall be destroyed, ver. 8.—In the mean time, to enable the Thessalonians, and every one who might read this letter, to judge properly of the apostacy, the apostle described the manner in which it was to enter, and the vile arts by which it was to be established, ver. 9, 10.—And to put the faithful upon their guard against the authors and abettors of the apostacy, he declared, that such as give heed to these impostors, will, at length, through the strong working of error, be seduced to believe the greatest and most pernicious lie that ever was devised, and shall on that account be condemned, ver. 11, 12.—Then he expressed his charitable opinion, that the Thessalonians would never be involved in any apostacy, ver. 13, 14.—and exhorted them to hold fast the doctrines which he had delivered to them, whether by sermons or by letters, ver. 15.—And that they might be enabled to do so, he earnestly prayed that Christ himself and God the Father would comfort them, and establish them in every good doctrine and practice, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 1, 2. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming, &c.] Dr. Heylin has it, *Now, with respect to the coming, &c. and our being assembled with him,—I desire, brethren, ver. 2. that you would not inconsiderately change your sentiments, and be alarmed by any revelation, or discourse, or letter, as from us, as if the day of Christ were to come immediately.* Michaelis thinks,

4 B

4 Who opposeth and ^b exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

5 ^b Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now ye know what * withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the ^a mystery of iniquity doth al-

^a Dan. 11. 36, 37. & 7 8, 26. Rev. 13. 6—8. with 1 Cor. 8. 5. ^b Ver. 15. Rev. 3. 3. 1 Thess. 2. 11. Col. 1. 28. Acts, 20. 31. * Or *hideth*. Rev. 17. 5. Acts, 20. 29. 1 John, 2. 18. & 4. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 12. & 3. 3. 3 John, 9. Rom. 10. 3. Col. 2. 18—24.

thinks, that the second verse relates to some epistles forged in St. Paul's name, to propagate the notion above referred to; and to certain calculations and false prophecies applied to the same purpose. The Bishop of Bristol observes, in agreement with the above translation, that "the preposition which is translated by, ought rather to be translated *concerning*, as it signifies in Rom. ix. 27. 2 Cor. viii. 23. besides other places of scripture, and as it does in other authors. Now we beseech you, brethren, *concerning* the coming, &c. For he does not beseech them *by the coming of Christ*, but the coming of Christ is the subject of which he is treating; and it is in relation to this subject that he desires them not to be disturbed or affrighted, neither by revelation, nor by message, nor by letter, as from him, as if the day of Christ's coming was at hand." (See the Reflections.) The phrase of the *coming of Christ* must be taken literally for his coming in glory to judge the world, as the context will evince beyond contradiction. It is used in this sense in the former epistle. From 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. v. 1, 2. some had inferred, that the end of the world was now approaching, and the day of Christ was at hand: the apostle sets himself in this place to rectify that mistake; and it is with reference to this *coming of Christ* that he beseeches the Thessalonians, not to be shaken from their steadfastness, nor to be troubled and terrified, as if it was now at hand. Nothing then can be more evident and undeniable, than that the coming of Christ here intended, is his second coming in glory to judge the world; and of this second coming the apostle had spoken before, ch. i. 6—10. It was a point of great importance for the Thessalonians not to be mistaken in this particular; because if they were taught to believe that the coming of Christ was at hand, and he should not come according to their expectation, they might be staggered in their faith; and, finding part of their creed to be false, might be hasty enough to conclude that the whole was so. The apostle therefore cautions them in the strongest manner against this delusion, and assures them, that other memorable events will take place before the coming of the Lord.

Ver. 3. 4. *For that day shall not come, except, &c.*] "The day of Christ shall not come, except there come the apostacy first." The apostacy here described is plainly not of a civil, but of a religious nature; not a revolt from the government, but a defection from the true religion and worship. In the original it is *the apostacy*, with an article to give it an emphasis. The article being added, signifies "that famous and before-predicted apostacy." So likewise is *the man of sin*, with the like article, and the like emphasis. If then the notion of *the man of sin* be derived from any ancient prophet, it must be derived from Dan.

vii. 25, &c. Any man may be satisfied that St. Paul alluded to Daniel's description, because he has not only borrowed the same ideas, but has even adopted some of the phrases and expressions. *The man of sin* may signify either a single man, or a succession of men: a succession of men being meant in Daniel, it is probable that the same was intended here also. It is the more probable, because a single man appears hardly sufficient for the work here assigned; and it is agreeable to the phraseology of scripture, and especially to that of the prophets, to speak of a body, or number of men, under the character of one. *The man of sin* seems to be expressed from Dan. vii. 24. according to the Greek translation, *he shall exceed in evil all that went before him*; and he may fulfil the character, either by promoting wickedness in general, or by advancing idolatry in particular, as the word *sin* frequently signifies in scripture. *The son of perdition* is also the denomination of the traitor Judas, John, xvii. 12. which implies, that *the man of sin* should be, like Judas, a false apostle; like him betray Christ, and, like him, be devoted to destruction. *Who opposeth, &c.* is manifestly copied from Daniel, *He shall exalt himself, &c.* The features exactly resemble each other: *He opposeth and exalteth himself above all*; or, according to the Greek, "above every one that is called God, or that is worshipped." The Greek word for *worshipped*, is *σεβασμα*, alluding to the Greek title of the Roman emperors, *σεβαστος*, which signifies *august* or *venerable*. He shall oppose,—for the prophets speak of things future, as present;—"he shall oppose and exalt himself, not only above inferior magistrates, (who are sometimes called *gods* in holy writ,) but even above the greatest emperors, and shall arrogate to himself divine honours:—*So that he as God sitteth in the temple, &c.*" By the *temple of God*, the apostle could not mean the temple of Jerusalem, because that, he knew, would be totally destroyed within a few years. After the death of Christ, the temple of Jerusalem is never called by the apostles *the temple of God*; and if, at any time, they make mention of *the house* or *temple of God*, they mean the church in general, or every particular believer. Whoever will consult 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Rev. iii. 12. will want no other examples to prove, that, under the gospel-dispensation, *the temple of God* is the church of Christ: and *the man of sin's sitting there as God*, implies his ruling and presiding there; and *sitting there as God*, implies his claiming divine authority, in things spiritual as well as temporal; and *showing himself that he is God*, implies his doing it with the utmost ostentation.

Ver. 5, 6, 7. *Remember ye not, &c.*] The apostle thought it a part of his duty, as he made it a part of his preaching and doctrine, to forewarn his new converts of the grand

ready work : only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that ^{*} Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume [†] with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming :

9 *Even him*, whose coming is [‡] after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of un-

righteousness in [°] them that perish ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 [¶] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie :

12 [‡] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But [†] we are bound to give thanks alway

^{*} Ver. 3, 4. Rev. 9. 1—11. & xii. Dan. 7. 8, 20—27. & 11. 35—40. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. & 4. 3, 4. [†] Dan. 7. 10, 11, 22, 26. & 11. 45. 2 Tim. 3. 9. Rev. 12. 5, 17, 18. & 13. 10. & 14. 6—20. & 18. 6—8. & xvi. & 17. 13, 16. & 18. 2—23. & 19. 7, 20, 21. & 20. 10. [‡] 11. 11, 4. 1 Peter, 6. 5. Rev. 2. 16. & 10. 10, 20, 21. Job, 4. 9. [§] Dan. 13. 1. Mar. 23. 24. John, 8. 24. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Eph. 2. 2. Rev. 13. 7, 14. & 10. 20. [¶] Rev. 13. 8. & 17. 8. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 3. 1 Th. 1. 10. 17. [‡] Pl. 31. 11, 12. & 109. 17. Prov. 1. 29. 1 Kings, 22. 22. [°] Jer. 44. 10. & 66. 4. Erick. 14. 6. Mat. 24. 5, 11, 24. 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. Rev. 9. 8, 10. & 13. 2—8, 11—16. [¶] Rom. 1. 32. Pl. 9. 17. Mark, 16. 16. [‡] Ch. 1. 3, 4. Eph. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 2—4.

grand apostacy that would infect the church, even while he was at Thessalonica. From these verses it appears, that the man of sin was not then revealed : *His time was not yet come, or the season of his manifestation. The mystery of iniquity was indeed already working* ;—the seeds of corruption were sown ; but they were not grown up to maturity. The man of sin was yet hardly conceived in the womb ; it must be some time before he could be brought forth. There was some obstacle that hindered his appearing : what this was, we cannot determine with absolute certainty at so great a distance of time ; but, if we may rely upon the concurrent testimony of the fathers, it was the Roman empire. Most probably it was somewhat relating to the higher powers, because the apostle observes such caution : he mentioned it in discourse, but would not commit it to writing. See ver. 15. Tertullian says, (Apolog. p. 31.) “ We Christians are under a particular necessity of praying for the emperors, and for the continued state of the empire ; because we know that that dreadful power which hangs over the whole world, and the conclusion of the age which threatens the most horrible evils, is retarded by the continuance of the time appointed for the Roman empire. This is what we would not experience. And, while we pray that it may be deferred, we hereby shew our good will to the perpetuity of the Roman state.”

Ver. 8. *Then shall that Wicked be revealed, &c.* When the obstacle mentioned in the preceding verse should be removed, then shall that Wicked, &c. Nothing can be plainer than that *the lawless (ὁ ἀνομος)*, as the Greek signifies,—*the wicked one* here mentioned, and *the man of sin*, must be one and the same person. The apostle was speaking before of what hindered that he should be revealed, and would continue to hinder, till it was taken away ; “ and then shall that wicked one, &c.” Not that he should be consumed immediately after he was revealed ; but the apostle, to comfort the Thessalonians, no sooner mentions his revelation, than he foretels also his destruction, even before he describes his other qualifications. His other qualifications should have been described first in order of time ; but the apostle hastens to what was first and warmest in his thoughts and wishes, “ *Whom the Lord shall consume, &c.*” If these two clauses refer to two distinct

and different events, the meaning manifestly is, That the Lord Jesus shall gradually consume him with the free preaching and publication of his word ; and shall utterly destroy him at his second coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. If these two clauses relate to one and the same event, it is a pleonasm very usual in the sacred, as well as other Oriental writings ; and the purport plainly is, that the Lord Jesus shall destroy him with the greatest facility, *when he shall be revealed from heaven* ; as the apostle has expressed it in the preceding chapter, ver. 7, 8. But I prefer the former interpretation.

Ver. 9—12. *Whose coming is after, &c.* The apostle was eager to foretel the destruction of the man of sin ; and for this purpose, having broken in upon his subject, he now returns to it again, and describes the other qualifications by which this wicked one should advance and establish himself in the world. He should rise to credit and authority by the most diabolical methods ; should pretend to supernatural powers, and boast of revelations, visions, and miracles, false in themselves, and applied to promote false doctrines ; ver. 9. He should likewise practise all other wicked arts of deceit ; should be guilty of the most impious frauds and impositions upon mankind ; but should prevail essentially only among those who are destitute of a sincere affection for the truth, whereby they might attain eternal salvation ; ver. 10. And indeed, it is a just and righteous judgment of God, to give them over to vanities and lies in this world, and to condemnation in the next, who have no regard for truth and holiness, but delight in falsehood and wickedness ; ver. 11, 12.

Upon this survey there appears little room to doubt of the genuine sense and meaning of the passage. The Thessalonians (as we have seen from some expressions in the former epistle,) were alarmed, as if the end of the world was at hand. The apostle, to correct their mistakes, and dissipate their fears, assures them, that a great apostacy or defection of the Christian, or visible church, from the true faith and worship, must happen before the coming of Christ. This apostacy all the concurrent marks and characters will justify us in charging upon the church of Rome. The true Christian worship is, the worship of the *Three-One God, through the one only Mediator, the man Christ Jesus* ;

to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth :

Jesus; and from this worship the church of Rome has notoriously departed, by substituting other mediators, and invocating and adoring saints and angels. Nothing is apostacy, if idolatry be not: and are not the members of the church of Rome guilty of idolatry in the worship of images, in the adoration of the host, in the invocation of angels and saints, and in the oblation of prayers and praises to the Virgin Mary, as much or more than to God blessed for ever? This is the grand corruption of the Christian church: this is *The apostacy*, as it is emphatically called, and deserves to be called; which was not only predicted by St. Paul, but by the prophet Daniel likewise. If the apostacy be rightly charged upon the church of Rome, it follows of consequence, that *the man of sin* is the Pope; not meaning any pope in particular, but *the Pope* in general, as the chief head and supporter of this apostacy. He is properly *the man of sin*, not only on account of the scandalous lives of many popes, but by reason of their most scandalous doctrines and principles; dispensing with the most necessary duties, and granting, or rather selling, pardons and indulgences to the most abominable crimes. Or, if by *sin* be meant *idolatry* particularly, as frequently in the Old Testament, it is evident how he has perverted the worship of God to superstition and idolatry of the grossest kind. He also, like the false apostle Judas, is *the son of perdition*; whether actively, as being the cause of destruction to others, or passively, as being devoted to destruction himself. *He opposeth*:—he is the great adversary to God and man; persecuting and destroying by *Croisadoes*, inquisitions, and massacres, those Christians who prefer the word of God to the authority of men. The *heathen emperor* of Rome may have slain his thousands of innocent Christians; but the *Christian bishop* of Rome has slain his ten thousands. *He exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped*; not only above inferior magistrates, but likewise above all bishops; not only above all bishops, but likewise above kings and emperors; deposing some, obliging them to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, treading even upon the neck of a king, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot; nay, not only above kings and emperors, but likewise above Christ himself;—*making even the word of God of none effect by his traditions*; forbidding what God hath commanded; as marriage, the use of the scriptures, &c.—and also commanding or allowing what God hath forbidden; as idolatry, persecution, &c. *So that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, &c.* He is therefore in profession a Christian, and a Christian bishop: *His sitting in the temple of God*, plainly implies his having a seat, or *cathedra*, in the Christian church: and he sits there *as God*, especially at his inauguration, when he sits upon the high altar in St. Peter's church, and makes the table of the Lord his footstool, and, in that position, receives adoration. At all times he exercises divine authority in the church,—*showing himself that he is God*; affecting divine titles, and asserting that his decrees are of the same or greater authority than the word of God. So that the pope is evidently, according to the titles given him in the public decretals, “The God upon earth;” at

least, there is no one like him, *who exalteth himself above every God*; no one like him, *who sitteth as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*. The foundations of popery were laid in the apostle's days, but the superstructure was raised by degrees; and several ages passed before the building was completed, and *the man of sin revealed* in full perfection. The tradition which generally prevailed was, that *what hindered* was the Roman empire: this tradition might have been derived even from the apostle himself; and therefore the primitive Christians, in the public offices of the church, prayed for its peace and welfare; as knowing that, when the Roman empire should be dissolved and broken into pieces, the empire of *the man of sin* would be raised upon its ruins. In the same proportion as the power of the empire decreased, the authority of the church increased, and the latter at the expence and ruin of the former; till, at length, the pope grew up above all, and *the wicked, or lawless one*, was fully manifested and revealed. His coming is *after the energy of Satan, &c.*; and does it require any particular proof, that the pretensions of the pope, and the corruptions of the church of Rome, are all supported and authorized by feigned visions and miracles, by pious frauds, and impositions of every kind?—But how much soever *the man of sin* may be exalted, and how long soever he may reign, yet, at last, *the Lord shall consume him, &c.* This is partly taken from Isai. xi. 4. [*And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*] where the Jews put an emphasis upon the words *the wicked one*, as appears from the Chaldee, which renders it, “He shall destroy the *wicked Roman.*” If the two clauses (as said in the note on ver. 8.) relate to two different events, the meaning is, “That the Lord Jesus shall gradually consume him with “the free preaching of the gospel, and shall utterly destroy “him at his second coming in the glory of the Father.” The former began to take effect at the reformation, and the latter will be accomplished in God's appointed time. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, (as above,) Origen, Laſtantius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom, give much the same interpretation which has here been given of the whole passage: and it must be owned, that this is the genuine meaning of the apostle; that this only is consistent with the context; that every other interpretation is forced and unnatural; that this is liable to no material objection; that it coincides perfectly with Daniel; that it is agreeable to the tradition of the primitive church, and that it has exactly been fulfilled in almost all its particulars;—which cannot be said of any other interpretation whatever. Such a prophecy as this, is an illustrious proof of divine revelation; and an excellent antidote to the poison of popery.

Ver. 13. Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, &c.] The apostle saw the full evidences of God's intention of mercy and goodness towards them. The original word *ἐλετο* signifies a voluntary favourable designation, appointment, and choice of a person to any particular purpose and end; not such a choice as necessarily secures the end, or is inconsistent with the refusal of the person

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, Christ,
to the obtaining of the 'glory of our Lord Jesus

15 Therefore, brethren, ' stand fast, and

* Eph. 1. 14. John, 10. 28. 1 John, 2. 25. John, 17. 24. & 14. 2. 3. Rev. 3. 21. Rom. 8. 17.

1 Cor. 16. 13. Phil. 4. 1. 1 Cor. 11. 2.

Ch. 3. 6, 14. Prov. 23. 23. Jude, 3. Rev. 3. 11. & 2. 10.

fo chosen to accept the favour intended him. In this sense one of the historians * uses the word, where he tells us " that when Antonine, the son of Severus the Roman emperor, was killed, the soldiers chose (the word the apostle here uses) Audentius for emperor ; but that he, alleging old age in excuse, refused to accept the empire : " they offered him the honour, but he would not accept " of it." Thus God chose the Thessalonians to the gospel salvation, offered them the benefit of it, and called them to the means of it, and made it fully appear that he intended and designed them this invaluable favour. The choice here spoken of, is evidently such a one, as had grounds of certainty attending it ; for the apostle speaks of it with full assurance, as a matter that he knew, and for which he was bound in duty to return thanks to God : and by consequence cannot relate to any such absolute and eternal choice of every one of the Thessalonian converts to eternal salvation, as should necessarily, and infallibly, and finally secure that event. This the word never signifies ; nor could St. Paul know it without such a revelation from God, as we have no ground to think he was ever favoured with. The choice of God therefore here spoken of, is such a free and gracious designation and appointment of them to the gospel salvation, as carried its own certainty and proof with it, and, according to the proper meaning of the original word, implies only his graciously making the offers of it ; giving them the choice of it ; calling them to the means of obtaining it, and making it fully appear to them that he intended them this invaluable blessedness ; a benefit they could never have expected or obtained, but from the merciful assurance and voluntary offer of God : and this they had from the beginning ; *he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation ;* that is to say, " not from eternity, " which has no beginning, but from the beginning of my " preaching the gospel among you, and your being called " by it to the knowledge and belief of the truth." Thus St. John, 1 John, ii. 7. *I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning :* and again, ver. 24. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning :* that is to say, " from the first publication of the gospel " doctrine : " so here, *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation :* " It appears from the time of my first entrance among you, and preaching the gospel to you, " that God intended you the benefit of this great salvation, and chose you by his mercy to this invaluable favour." But how did this appear ? How did God choose them to this great salvation ?—*Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* This was both the means and the evidence of that choice ; so that this choice

cannot possibly refer to any eternal secret choice of God, but to the actual choice of them, by the gift of the Spirit, and their belief of the gospel truth.

Ver. 15. The traditions] This probably refers to the prophecy concerning *the man of sin* in the preceding verses, and to the explication which the apostle had given of some particulars respecting it by word of mouth.

Inferences.—With humble reverence let us behold the depths of the divine counsels and judgments : God hath been pleased to suffer the craft of Satan to display itself, in seducing from his allegiance a great part of the Christian world : yet has he *taken the wise in his own craftiness*, so far, as to make that very *apostacy* from Christianity an additional proof of its divine original. Who, that had only examined the genius of that holy religion, could have imagined that such a *mystery of iniquity* should have arisen in it, and that *man of sin* have been revealed ? Surely, when the particulars of the description come to be compared with the accomplishment, it may seem owing to some wonderful insatiation, that men of deep policy and great penetration, with this very passage of scripture in their hands, should have suffered the marks of *Antichrist* to be so very apparent, even, in many instances, beyond what might have seemed absolutely necessary for establishing that secular kingdom which they sought : particularly that the *pope*, on high days, should set himself on a *high throne*, in the *temple of God*, to be there solemnly adored, and should have permitted his parasites to expressly to boast *that he is God*, and to give him, in some of their licensed and authorized works, divine titles !

The scandalous and extravagant pretences which the followers of the papacy have made to *miracles*,—exceeding in number, and some of them in wonderful circumstances, of Christ and his apostles,—plainly display the *energy of Satan*, that father of frauds, whether pious or impious. And the most incredible lies, which they have by solemn and irrevocable acts made essential to their faith, shew the *strength of delusion*, beyond what could have been imagined, had not fact led us into the theory. How dreadful is it to think of some of those expressions which the Spirit itself uses, when speaking of these artificers of deceit ? that they should be *abandoned by God to believe a lie* ; that *they may all be damned, who have pleasure in unrighteousness* ;—that they might bring upon themselves eternal aggravated damnation !

Who would not tremble, who would not grieve, for so many of our fellow-creatures, yea, of those, who, degenerate as their form of Christianity is, we must yet call our *fellows christians*, who are thus dishonoured, enslaved, endangered ?—The Lord grant that they may not be utterly undone !—Let them *despise us* ; let them, by most solemn execrations, annually repeated, devote us to destruction, and prepare against us all the instruments of it in their power ; yet still we will *pray for them*. God grant that they

* Herod. iv. 14. 3, 4.

hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 " Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us,

^a Ch. i. 2. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Jer. 31. 2. 1 John, 4. 9, 10, 19. John, 16. 27. & 3. 16.

they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Let us recommend to divine compassion the souls drawn after artful and wicked leaders, in the simplicity of their hearts; and take comfort in this thought,—that the time is approaching, *when the Lord shall destroy this son of perdition with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.* May the remnant of God's people among them take the alarm, and *come out from them in time, and be separate,* that they may not be *partakers with them in their plagues,* Rev. xviii. 4.

How gracefully and happily does the apostle unite the views of the grace of God and the duties of men, while he represents our *choice of salvation* in a light so worthy of God, —since this salvation is still to be obtained *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* Our spirits must be sanctified by the operation of the divine Spirit: the truth must be not only speculatively, but powerfully, and *practically believed,* or all our hopes will be vain.—But surely, were it possible that salvation could any other way be obtained, it would be less desirable; or rather, that which did not imply a sanctified spirit, and a heart open to receive and obey the truth, would not deserve the name of *salvation.*

Blessed be God, who in this view has *called us to obtain salvation and glory by Jesus Christ, even God our Father who hath loved us.* From him do these divine consolations flow: It is by his blessed and gracious operation, that we are *strengthened and established in every good word and work.* His *fidelity* stands engaged to do it, if we humbly commit ourselves to him, and wait upon him: in such case, the prayers of the apostles, dictated no doubt from above, concur with the promises to encourage our hopes, that he will *direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patience of Christ.* On the exercise of that love, and that patience, does the happiness of life chiefly depend. Too ready are our weak hearts to wander from it, and to faint under the difficulties which lie in our way. Let us then call on him to preserve and maintain the graces which he has implanted, that they may be exerted with growing vigour and constancy even unto the end.

Unreasonable and wicked men will naturally oppose the progress of the gospel, which has so powerful a tendency to promote holiness and comfort: and, as there are those who *have not faith,* they will be ready to labour for its destruction: but when the *prayers of Christians* are frequently engaged, that *the word of God may run and be glorified,* there is good reason to hope, that much of their perverse opposition may be overruled to the most contrary purposes; so that *the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of that wrath be restrained.* Pl. lxxvi. 10.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, An error of a dangerous tendency had, it seems, crept into the church of the Thessalonians, that the coming of Christ to judge the world would be in their days. Whether this arose from their mistake of what

the apostle had mentioned in his former epistle, or was propagated by some who vouched his authority to support what they advanced, he sets himself to confute the assertion, and to rectify their judgment in this matter.

1. He solemnly warns them not to be troubled with needless fears and apprehensions. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him;* by all the hopes you entertain of meeting him with joy in that day, I adjure you, *that ye be not soon shaken in mind from the gospel which you have embraced, and tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; or be troubled* by any assertions which may be advanced, or misconstructions which may arise; *neither by spirit, by those who pretend to speak under divine inspiration; nor by word, however confident y any may advance this notion; nor by letter as from us,* either counterfeiting our hand, or perverting our meaning; *as that the day of Christ is at hand.* Let no man deceive you by any means: the consequences of such a persuasion would be dangerous; and when you found yourselves disappointed of your vainly raised expectations, it might shake your faith in the truth of the whole gospel revelation. Note; (1.) One way in which the arch deceiver strikes at the faith of God's people, is by endeavouring, through his emissaries pretending to revelation, or a knowledge of the prophetic word, to raise groundless hopes in their minds, and from the disappointment of them to suggest that the whole may be a delusion. (2.) Though we cannot fix the time of Christ's coming, yet nothing is more certain, than that he that cometh shall come, and will not tarry: may we without fear or dismay be ready to meet him! (3.) However dispersed God's faithful saints now may be in different regions, and living in different ages, they shall one day be gathered together around the throne of Jesus, and so shall be ever with the Lord.

2. He confutes the error which was propagated, by shewing, that many events which would require much time to fulfil them, must precede the second coming of Christ.

(1.) There must be first a general apostacy. *For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first* from the doctrines of the gospel, and the practice of godliness, which shall usher in the reign of antichrist.

(2.) The rise of the antichristian power is described, ver. 3—10. To whom what is here spoken belongs, has been a matter of much dispute: but I must declare, with the best protestant commentators, my full conviction, that the Popish hierarchy is the subject of this prophecy; wherein we have,

[1.] *The names of the person, or rather state, here spoken of—The man of sin, the son of perdition, that wicked one;* which do not point out any individual, but a succession of men, carrying on the same destructive designs.

[2.] *When that man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, he may be known by these characters: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;*

and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

* Pl. 103. 17. Heb. 9. 12. & 13. 20. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. Heb. 6. 13, 19. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. & 5. 1. * If. 40. 1, 2. & 41. 10, 14. & 46. 4. & 51. 3, 12. & 54. 10. & 57. 18, 17. & 58. 11. & 60. 19, 20. & 61. 2, 10. & 66. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 3—6. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 1 Thess. 3. 13.

shipped; assuming all power in heaven and in earth; undertaking to enact laws contrary to God's word and will; and setting up himself above kings and emperors: so that he as God, arrogating divine perfections; sitteth in the temple of God, the church, where he has erected his unhallowed throne; shewing himself that he is God; assuming the blasphemous titles of, *our God the pope, God upon earth, &c.* usurping divine authority over the bodies and consciences of men, and pretending to pardon sin by his own power. Remember ye not, says the apostle, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things.

[3.] His rise is pointed out. *And now ye know, if you reflect upon what I told you formerly, what withholdeth, that the man of sin does not immediately appear, even the power of the heathen Roman emperors. During their rule, the bishops of Rome were prevented from rising above their fellows; but this empire would in process of time moulder away, when he should be revealed in his time—when God would permit the antichristian power to rear its head. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, and the seeds of pride, dissention, and worldly ambition, have begun to be sown: but he that letteth, the Roman emperors, will let, until he be taken out of the way, their power declining, and the seat of empire being removed from Rome; and then shall that Wicked one be revealed, and the mystery of iniquity and the tyranny of the popish power soon arrive at their height.*

[4.] His ruin is as certain as his rise. *Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; raising up a noble army of preachers, who by the word of truth, accompanied with the Spirit's power, shall cut in sunder the fetters wherewith superstition has enslaved the minds of men: and as the kingdom of antichrist shall be overturned hereby, so shall he and all who enter into his spirit perish at last in the lake of fire.*

[5.] The way in which this wicked one shall maintain his usurped dominion, is described. *Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; with all Satanical influence and wiles, pretending to work miracles in support of his cause, and by a system of frauds deluding the nations of the earth, with all deceptableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, deceiving the souls of men to their eternal ruin; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, but wilfully turned aside to the greatest errors, and wilfully chose their own delusions. And for this cause, in just judgment upon them, God shall send them strong delusion; abandoning them to their own hearts, and giving them up to judicial blindness; that they should believe a lie; all those absurd legends, forgeries, and falsehoods, with which the church of Rome abounds: that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, wilfully rejecting Christ and his gospel; but had pleasure in unrighteousness, delighting in their errors, superstitions, and bloody persecutions, to fill up the*

measure of their iniquities. *Note; It is just in God to abandon obstinate sinners to their own delusions, and to leave them to the damnation which themselves have chosen.*

2dly, The apostle,

1. Expresses his thankfulness to God for his love. Such corruptions as the abovementioned will at length arise in the church; and we have hinted that something of this spirit is already beginning to work. *But blessed be God that so little of it appears among you; on the contrary, we are sensible that we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, whom we have great reason to address as beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning [of our ministry] chosen you to salvation; * for a participation of which you are prepared by that sanctification, which is the work of the Holy Spirit on your hearts, and that belief of the truth, which has so effectual a tendency to promote it. This is God's appointed way of obtaining an interest in this salvation, to which he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; that glory which his mercy hath prepared for all his persevering saints, and to which his faithful care shall at length conduct them; in which they shall fully enjoy the rich provisions of his love, and be made like him in holiness and happiness.*

2. He exhorts them to be faithful. *Therefore, brethren, let me exhort you to stand fast, and strongly to retain the instructions which you have learned of us, whether by word or by our former letter, as you may be assured you have there a genuine representation of the contents of those important doctrines with which we are intrusted. Note; God's word is our only rule of duty; thereunto we must cleave.*

3. He closes with a fervent prayer for them. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who alike are the objects of our worship, and are one in the glory of the same undivided godhead; who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, the foretastes of those joys which will hereafter be uninterrupted and eternal to all the faithful saints; and good hope through grace, built on the merit of his blood and our interest in him, comfort your hearts with a clearer knowledge of your invaluable privileges, and a brighter manifestation of his love to your souls, amidst all your trials and sufferings; and stablish you in every good word and work, that you may approve yourselves faithful, and unto death persevere immovably in the doctrine and practice of the blessed gospel. Note; It is the Lord's work to comfort and stablish our hearts; and while we are waiting upon him, we shall assuredly renew our strength.*

CHAP. III.

IN the end of the foregoing chapter, by praying God to comfort and establish the Thessalonians, the apostle in-

* See the Annotations, where this text is fully considered.

C H A P. III.

He desireth their prayers for himself, testifieth what confidence he hath in them, maketh request to God in their behalf, giveth them divers precepts, especially to shun idleness and ill-company; and, last of all, concludeth with prayer and salutation.

[Anno Domini 52.]

FINALLY, brethren, ^a pray for us, ^b that the word of the Lord ^c may have *free*

^a 1 Theff. 5. 25. Eph. 6. 19, 20. Col. 4. 3. Rom. 15. 30. Mat. 9. 38. ^b Acts, 6. 7. & 13. 49. 1 Cor. 16. 9. Tit. 2. 10—14. 1 Theff. 2. 5. ^c Gr. *may run*. ^d Rom. 15. 31. 1 Theff. 2. 18. ^e Gr. *aburd*. ^f Rom. 10. 16. Mat. 21. 25. John, 6. 44. Acts, 2. 40. & 13. 45, 50. & 17. 5, 13. & 28. 24. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. ^g Num. 23. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 9 & 10. 13. 1 Theff. 3. 5, 23, 24. & 3. 3, 13. John, 17. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 18. ^h 2 Cor. 7. 16. Gal. 5. 10. 1 Theff. 4. 10. & 5. 11. Ch. 2. 15. Ver. 6, 11. Rom. 2. 7. Gal. 6. 9.

linuated, that God's assistance, obtained by their own prayers and by the prayers of others, is the best preservative from apostacy and sin. Wherefore St. Paul, at this time, being deeply affected with the malice and rage of the unbelieving Jews, who, while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, had made an insurrection, in which the apostle's life was endangered, besought the Thessalonians to pray to God in behalf of him and his assistants; that, by their bold and faithful preaching, the gospel might be as speedily and successfully propagated through the world, as it had been among the Thessalonians, ver. 1.—and that they might be delivered from those brutish and unreasonable men of the Jewish nation, who pretended to have faith in the true God, but had it not, ver. 2.—However, that the malice of the Jews might not terrify the Thessalonians too much, he put them in mind of the power and faithfulness of Christ, who will not suffer his servants to be tempted above what they are able to bear, ver. 3.—then prayed God to direct them all to that which was good, ver. 4.—And because his former letter had not reclaimed the disorderly among them, he, in the name and by the authority of Christ, commanded the faithful to avoid the company and conversation of those who had not obeyed his former order concerning working for their own maintenance, ver. 6.—And to add the more weight to his command, he put the Thessalonians in mind, that when he and his assistants were with them, they did not, on pretence of their being employed in preaching the gospel, lead an idle life, ver. 7.—nor intrude themselves into the houses of the rich, nor live on other people's labour; but wrought daily for their own maintenance, ver. 8.—This course they followed, not because they had no right to maintenance from their disciples, but to make themselves examples of prudent industry to the Thessalonians, ver. 9.—Farther, he put them in mind, that when he was with them, he commanded, if any man did not work, none of them should give him to eat, ver. 10.—And, because he was informed, that there were still among them persons who did not work at all, but who went about idly, observing and censuring other people's actions, pretending perhaps, that, as the day of judgment was at hand, to employ themselves in worldly affairs was inconsistent with the care of their salvation, ver. 11.—such idle persons he commanded immediately to correct their disorderly way of living, ver. 12.—and the faithful he exhorted, not to

course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

2 And that ^e we may be delivered from ^f unreasonable and wicked men: for ^d all men have not faith.

3 But the Lord is ^e faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

4 And ^f we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the

become weary of honestly working for their own maintenance, and of doing acts of charity to the really needy, ver. 13.—At the same time, that his injunctions might be better obeyed by the disorderly than formerly, he desired the rulers of the church, if any refused to do the things commanded in this letter, to point them out to the faithful, that they might put them to shame, by avoiding their company, as he had directed, ver. 14. yet they were not to regard them as enemies, but to admonish them as brethren, who might still be reclaimed, ver. 15.—Next, to shew his great affection to the Thessalonians, he prayed for all manner of happiness to them, ver. 16.—Lastly, to authenticate this epistle, the apostle, with his own hand, wrote the salutation; and declared it to be the mark, by which all his genuine letters might be distinguished from such as were forged, ver. 17.—and finished this epistle with his apostolic benediction, ver. 18.

Ver. 1.] The apostle now proceeds to the close of his epistle; and as he had so often and so ardently prayed for his Thessalonians, he here begs their prayers for him and his fellow-labourers in the gospel; and as having upon his mind a continual sense of their distresses, he again intimates, that under all their discouragements they ought to remember, that though so many of mankind would prove *faithless*, the Lord Jesus Christ would prove *faithful*; and they ought to imitate, obey, and depend upon him, as well as patiently wait for his second coming, ver. 1—5. Instead of *may have free course*, some render the word *τρέχον*, *may run*: and they think that this and the next words allude to the applause given to those who made a speedy progress in the *races*, which constituted so important a part of the Grecian games.

Ver. 2. Unreasonable.] 'Απόροι, *absurd, contumacious persons*, who are not to be fixed by any principles, and whom no *topics* can work upon. Some suppose that the unbelieving Jews are here meant. By *faith*, in this verse, some understand a principle of honesty, which may encourage a confidence to be reposed; but it seems rather here to mean that upright and candid disposition, which would engage men through grace to receive cordially the testimony of the apostles; and not particularly justifying or sanctifying faith.

Ver. 3. From evil.] 'Από τὸ πονηρὸν; *from the evil one*. The Hebrews commonly speak of the *devil*, as the source and author of all evil; and of *God*, as the author of all good:

things which we command you.

5 And ^s the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and ^h into ^{*} the patient waiting for Christ.

6 Now we command you, brethren, ⁱ in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye ^k withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ^l ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but ^m wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9 ⁿ Not because we have not power, but

^o to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, ^p that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some which ^q walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies.

12 Now them that are such ^r we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, ^s that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, ^t † be not weary in well-doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word † by this epistle, ^u note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

^s 1 Chron. 29. 18. Job. 31. ^t John. 4. 16, 19. ^u Mat. 12. 37. ^v 1 Thess. 4. 11, 13, 9. ^w 1 Thess. 3. 3. & 1. 1, 10. Titus, 2. 13. ^x 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. ^y 2 Pet. 3. 12. ^z Or the patience of Christ. ^{aa} 1 Cor. 5. 4. Acts, 3. 6. Ver. 6. ^{ab} Ver. 14. Rom. 16. 17. ^{ac} 2 Tim. 3. 5. ^{ad} 1 Thess. 5. 14. & 4. 11. ^{ae} Titus, 3. 10. ^{af} 2 John 8. 9, 10. ^{ag} 1 Cor. 5. 9, 11, 13. ^{ah} 1 Cor. 4. 16. & 11. 1. ^{ai} 1 Thess. 1. 6. & 2. 10. & 4. 11. ^{aj} Acts 18. 3. & 20. 34. ^{ak} 1 Cor. 4. 12. ^{al} 2 Cor. 11. 9 & 12. 13. ^{am} 1 Thess. 2. 9. ^{an} Mat. 10. 0. ^{ao} 1 Cor. 9. 1-6, 14. Gal. 6. 6. ^{ap} 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18. ^{aq} 1 Cor. 4. 16. & 11. 1. Phil. 3. 17. ^{ar} 1 Tim. 4. 12. ^{as} 1 Pet. 5. 3. ^{at} Gen. 3. 19. ^{au} 1 Thess. 4. 11. ^{av} 1 Tim. 5. 13. Ver. 6. If 56. 10. Mar. 20. 3, 6. ^{aw} 1 Pet. 4. 15. ^{ax} Ver. 6. Rom. 12. 1. ^{ay} 2 Cor. 10. 1. Ch. 2. 1. ^{az} 1 Tim. 5. 21. & 6. 13, 14. ^{ba} 2 Tim. 4. 1. ^{bb} 1 Thess. 4. 11. Ephes. 4. 28. Rom. 12. 11. ^{bc} Gal. 6. 9. ^{bd} 1 Cor. 15. 38. ^{be} 2 Pet. 3. 8. & 1. 4-8. Prov. 4. 18. ^{bf} † Or faint not. ^{bg} † Or signify that man by an epistle. ^{bh} Ver. 6. Mat. 18. 17.

good: and when they would describe any great evil in a most emphatical manner, they mention the apostate himself. See 1 Thess. ii. 18. Matth. vi. 13. John. xvii. 15. 1 John, v. 18, 19.

Ver. 4. *And we have confidence, &c.*] "We have that opinion of you, as Christians, and our dear children, that you will persevere in duty; and that the things which we have recommended, you both practise already, and will continue to practise." See ch. ii. 15. 2 Cor. vii. 16.

Ver. 5. *Into the patient waiting for Christ.*] The original, *Ἐπιμένετε τῷ Χριστῷ*, may be rendered *the patience of Christ*, and may signify either *Christian patience*, or that patience with which Christ himself suffered the many injuries and afflictions through which he pined.

Ver. 6.] St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12. had ordered the idle persons among them to work and maintain themselves in a creditable manner. As his directions had not been complied with, but, instead of reforming, they were rather grown worse, he here repeats what he had there said; rebuking with more severity such idle and officious persons as were a scandal to Christianity, and troublesome in civil society.

Ver. 7. *For we behaved not ourselves disorderly, &c.*] *ὅτι οὐκ ἔξαιρον ἑαυτοὺς*, we did not go out of our rank: an allusion to soldiers standing or marching in their proper ranks, out of which it is a great irregularity to depart in the least degree. The expression *night and day*, in the next verse, may possibly mean only *continually*: however, it seems to intimate that the apostle was sometimes obliged to sit up part of the night at his business as a tent-maker, that he might have the day at leisure, to preach to those who came to him for religious instruction.

Ver. 9. *Not because we have not power;*] St. Paul would

not here leave room for any person to insinuate, as we find his enemies did at Corinth, 1 Cor. ix. 1, &c. that he knew himself not to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and therefore he abstained from taking or demanding any thing from their church, merely for want of such an apostolic power; but, so heartily concerned was he to spread genuine Christianity, and so cautious and prudent, in order to do it in the most effectual manner, that he refused a maintenance in the rich city of Corinth, and thereby prevented the false apostle's demanding any thing under the pretence of his example; and, by maintaining himself at Thessalonica, he prevented the idle Christian brethren there from pleading the example of their great apostle in defence of their idleness.

Ver. 10. *That if any would not work, &c.*] This sentence occurs in many of the Jewish writings, and seems to have been proverbial: and both our Lord and his apostles frequently adopted those proverbs or sayings which were in general use.

Ver. 11. *Working not at all, but are busy-bodies.*] The original is, *Not working, but going about as busy-bodies*: not only idle, but officious; vices, which frequently accompany each other.

Ver. 12. *And eat their own bread.*] That which they have earned themselves. Therefore Dr. Heylin renders it, *and earn their bread by labour*.

Ver. 13. *Be not weary in well-doing.*] *Faint not*, nor be discouraged while you are engaged in a course of well-doing: though some may abuse your liberality, be not deterred thereby from works of charity. See Gal. vi. 9.

Ver. 14. *And if any man obey not, &c.*] Some would render this verse, *If any man obey not our words, signify, or take notice of him by your epistle to me, - that he may be reclaimed by shame.*

15 * Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but *be* with you all. admonish *him* as a brother.

16 Now † the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord I write.

* Lev. 19. 17. 2 Cor. 10. 8. & 13. 20. 1 Thess. 5. 14. † Rom. 15. 33. & 16. 20. 1 Cor. 14. 33. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 4. 9. 1 Thess. 5. 23. Numb. 6. 24—26. 1st. 29. 12. & 147. 14. Rom. 5. 1—11. & 8. 28. John, 16. 33. 2 Cor. 4. 17. † 1 Cor. 16. 27. Col. 4. 18. with ch. 2. 18. Rom. 16. 22.

Ver. 16. By all means.] Dr. Heylin renders the clause, *Grant you continual peace in all respects.*

Ver. 17. Which is the token in every epistle.] What was hinted before in this epistle, ch. ii. 2. may be an intimation,—as we observed,—that some *feign'd* letters were early written in his name, by which St. Paul might be induced to add this *token* with his own hand.

Inferences. How earnestly ought we to pray for the success of the glorious gospel, and for the preservation and liberty of the ministers of Christ, that their preaching of it may not be obstructed by the violence of unbelieving, perverse, and wicked men! And what a pleasure is it, when they, to whom the care of churches is committed, have a satisfaction in their own minds, that the Lord is establishing their flocks in the faith, hope, and holiness of the gospel, and that their hearts are engaged through grace to do his commandments, as delivered to them in his name! But, alas! how grievous is it to find, that any members of a Christian society are disorderly walkers, lazy in their own proper affairs, and mischievous busy-bodies in other men's concerns, to the scandal of the Christian name! The societies, to which persons of these characters belong, ought, in case they cannot be reclaimed, to withdraw from them, and pass such a censure as may be a mark of disgrace upon them, and then shun all familiarities with them, to make them ashamed of the evil of their doings, which are directly contrary to the precepts and example of the holy apostles: and yet they should be treated, as far as the nature of things will bear, in a brotherly way, to bring them to repentance. How unreasonable is it, that idle and disorderly walkers should live upon the charity of others! But how cheerfully and generously should the industrious and helpless poor be relieved, according to their wants! May all the churches of Christ have peace among themselves, and prosperity of every kind, from the Lord Jesus, and salute one another with the sincerest Christian affection! May their hearts be directed into the love of God, and a patient waiting, under their various tribulations, for Christ's second coming: and may his grace be ever with them all. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle now draws to a conclusion, and,

1. Entreats their prayers. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and spread with increasing success, and be glorified, even as it is with you, in the mighty effects produced by our ministration of it; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, hardened in pride and prejudice against the truth; who use every violent effort to oppose its progress, and silence the ministers of the gospel; for all men have not*

faith; but even among professors of Christianity we often meet with the greatest opposers, and are in most danger from these false brethren. *Note*; (1.) The success of his labours lies exceedingly near the heart of every gospel minister. (2.) All who have tasted of the grace of God in truth, are bound in ceaseless prayer to beg that the same word which they have received, may, in defiance of all opposition, run and be glorified, to the conviction of sinners, the confusion of gainfayers, and the edification of believers. (3.) Unreasonable and wicked men abound in every age; and they who, though professors of Christianity, are themselves destitute of divine faith, cannot but now, as then, testify the same enmity against the zealous preachers of the gospel.

2. He expresses his confidence in them. *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil; whatever wiles seducers may employ, or however severely you may be exposed to the enmity of persecutors, the Lord will never fail you, if you cleave to him; and his grace shall then make you more than conquerors. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you, in his name, and by his authority.* *Note*; When through faith we have the Lord at our right hand, neither the evil of sin shall prevail against us, nor the evil of suffering discourage us.

3. He adds a short prayer for them, containing two important requests. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, turning your affections from every crooked path, and directly leading you to his blessed Self, and to that happiness which is to be enjoyed by the faithful, in a sense of his present and everlasting love to their souls; and into the patient waiting for Christ; enabling you with cheerfulness and submission to take up the cross, and to look for the coming of your Lord, when there shall be an end put to all the sufferings of the saints for ever.*

2dly, Though the apostle had so highly commended them, and expressed his confidence in them in general, yet there were some among them who needed sharp rebuke.

1. He warns them to avoid the company of such as walked disorderly among them, whose ill characters he describes. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the apostolic power committed to us, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that pretends to be a Christian, but walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us, being a disgrace and a dishonour to his profession. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us, and remember the practices that we recommended to you, and the example which we set before you; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, without paying for it; but wrought with labour and travail night*

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

¶ The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

See 1 Theſſ. 5. 28. Rev. 22. 21.

and day, to earn our own maintenance, that we might not be chargeable to any of you, and might preach the gospel freely, without putting you to the least expence. Not because we have not power to demand our subsistence, as due to our ministerial labours; but we rather chose to wave our right, to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us, encouraging industry, and discountenancing idleness. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat, nor receive any relief from the church, whose charity should be applied, not to the maintenance of the slothful, but to the support of the sick, the infirm, and those who through age or accident are disabled from providing for themselves. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but depending on others for relief, and are busy-bodies, tattling from house to house, prying into the secrets of families, blowing up the coals of dissension, and the very pests of society. Note; (1.) When we can appeal to our people for the exemplariness of our own conversation, and for the conformity of our practice to our preaching, we may command and exhort them to their duty with confidence. (2.) Sloth and indolence are most opposite to the spirit of Christianity; and, though men may plead that they do no harm, yet if they neglect the duty of their calling and stations, God will reckon with them as with disorderly walkers. (3.) Idleness opens a door to every evil; and the devil will find sufficient employ for those who choose not to do their own work.

2. He addresses himself with authority to these disorderly walkers. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, by every endearing argument which his love can suggest, or which the dread of his displeasure urges, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread; peaceably minding their own affairs with diligence, and providing for themselves and families a becoming maintenance from the produce of their honest industry.

3. He directs the pious and industrious how they should

behave. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing, with diligence discharge the labours of your calling; and if you have more than your own necessities require, there are many deserving objects who crave your charity. And if any man among you obey not our word by this epistle and change not his ways, note that man, and have no company with him; permit him not to be your intimate, nor admit him to the table of the Lord; that by your just censure of his conduct, he may be ashamed, and brought to repentance and amendment. Yet count him not as an enemy at once, nor deal roughly with him, but admonish him as a brother, that he may be reclaimed, and not be finally ruined. Note; (1.) We must not only walk orderly ourselves, but shew our disapprobation of those who behave dishonourably to their profession. (2.) Before more heavy censures are pronounced, except with gross sinners, every kind admonition must be attempted. Love will often shame those into ingenuous acknowledgments, whom severity would but have exasperated and hardened.

3dly, The apostle concludes with,

1. His prayer for them. Now the Lord of peace himself, who purchased it by his blood, and by his Spirit seals it to the hearts of believers, give you peace always, by all means; meeting you in the use of every instituted ordinance; filling you with a comfortable sense of his reconciliation to you; and giving you a happy union and harmony among each other. The Lord be with you all; may his presence and blessing be ever in the midst of you; and where he manifests himself, there heaven is already begun in the soul.

2. His subscription. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, of its genuineness, to prevent the forgeries of seducers: so I write in the close of every letter, when my amanuensis has finished.

3. The benediction. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all; may you share all the present and eternal blessedness included in his infinite love. Amen.

THE FIRST EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
TIMOTHY.

P R E F A C E.

TIMOTHY. We have an account of Timothy in the Acts, xvi. 1, 3, and in other parts of the New Testament; from which he appears to have been a youth of the most excellent qualities, and the almost constant companion of St. Paul. This first Epistle to him is by some dated in the year 65, but by others, on better grounds, about the year 58, at the time of St. Paul's journey to Macedonia, Acts, xx. 1. The place where it was written is not certainly agreed on, though it is likely that St. Paul was either in Macedonia, or near it. Being obliged to retire from Ephesus earlier than he intended, on account of the insurrection raised by Demetrius, he left Timothy behind him, to restore perfect order in the church, to fill the ecclesiastical offices, and to withstand false teachers. As some of the Ephesians would not obey him, and others attempted to force themselves upon him as bishops and ministers, St. Paul wrote this epistle, which he might lay before them as his commission; so that it is as much to the Ephesians as to Timothy. See Ch. i. 3, 18. iv. 6, 12, 13. v. 23.

C H A P. I.

Timothy is put in mind of the charge which was given unto him by St. Paul, at his going to Macedonia. Of the right use and end of the law. Of St. Paul's calling to be an apostle: and of Hymeneus and Alexander.

[Anno Domini 58.]

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God^b our Saviour and

Lord Jesus Christ, ^c which is our hope;

2 Unto^d Timothy, my own son in the faith: ^e Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, ^f when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

^a Acts, 9. 15. & 13. 2. & 22. 21. & 26. 16—18. see Rom. 7. 1, 5. Gal. 1. 1. Eph. 4. 11. ^b Ch. 2. 3. & 4. 10. Luke, 1. 47. Tit. 1. 3. & 1. 10, 11. & 3. 4. Jude, 25. Deut. 32. 15. 1 Sam. 6. 1. 11. 12. 2. & 1. 15, 17, 22. ^c Pl. 71. 5. Col. 1. 27. 1 Thess. 1. 3. 2 Thess. 1. 16. Heb. 6. 18, 10. ^d Acts, 16. 1. 1 Cor. 4. 17. 1 Thess. 3. 2. Ch. 1. 18. Tit. 4. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. & 2. 1. Philem. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 4. Phil. 2. 19, 22. ^e See Rom. 3. 7. 2 Cor. 1. 1. Gal. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 2. ^f Acts, 20. 1, 3. Gal. 1. 6, 7. Ch. 6. 3, 17, 20. Col. 2. 4, 16. Ch. 4. 1, 6, 11. & 5. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 14. & 4. 2. Tit. 1. 13.

C H A P. I.

ST. PAUL began this epistle with asserting his apostolical dignity; not because Timothy was in any doubt con-

cerning it, but to make the Ephesians sensible of the danger they incurred, if they rejected the charges and admonitions which, by the commandment of God, the apostle ordered Timothy to deliver to them, ver. 1, 2.—Next, to establish

4 ^s Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; *so do.*

5 ^h Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good

conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned :

6 From which some having swerved ¹ have turned aside unto vain jangling ;

7 ^k Desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

^s Ch. 4. 7. & 6. 4. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 16, 23. Tit. 1. 14. & 3. 9. 2 Pet. 1. 16. ^h Mat. 23. 37-40. Rom. 13. 8-14. Gal. 5. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Heb. 9. 14. & 10. 22. Gal. 5. 6. Acts, 24. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 22. 1 John, 3. 18, 23. & 4. 20. ¹ Ch. 4. 2. & 5. 15. & 6. 4, 10, 20. 2 Tim. 2. 18. & 4. 4. Tit. 1. 10, 14. ^k Gal. 4. 23. Ch. 6. 4. Rom. 2. 19, 20.

establish Timothy's authority with the Ephesians as an evangelist, he renewed the commission that he had given him at parting; namely, to charge some who had assumed the office of teachers, not to teach differently from the apostles, ver. 3.—and in particular, not to draw the attention of the people to those fables, which the Jewish doctors had invented to make men rely on the ritual services of the law for procuring the favour of God, notwithstanding they were utterly negligent of the duties of morality; neither to lay any stress on those endless genealogies whereby individuals traced their pedigree from Abraham, in the persuasion that to secure their salvation nothing was necessary, but to be rightly descended from him; an error which the Baptist, long before, had expressly condemned, Luke, iii. 8. *Begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father,* ver. 4.—This kind of doctrine the apostle termed *vain babbling*, because it had no foundation in truth, and made men negligent both of piety and love, ver. 5, 6.—Farther, because in recommending these fables and genealogies, the Judaizers pretended that they were teaching the law of Moses, the apostle assured Timothy, they were utterly ignorant of that law, ver. 7. which he acknowledged to be a good and highly useful institution, provided it was used *lawfully*; that is, agreeably to its true nature, ver. 8.—whereas the Jews perverted the law, when they taught that it made a real atonement for sin by its sacrifices. For the law was not given to justify the Jews, but by temporal punishments to restrain them from vice; so that the law of Moses was no rule of justification to any person, ver. 9, 10.—This account of the law, St. Paul told Timothy, was agreeable to the representation given of it in the gospel, with the preaching of which he was intrusted, ver. 11.—an honour for which he was exceedingly thankful, because formerly he had been a persecutor of the disciples of Christ, ver. 12, 13.—But he had received mercy for this cause, that in him Jesus Christ might shew to future ages such an example of pardon as should encourage the greatest sinners to hope for mercy on repentance, ver. 16.—Then in a solemn doxology he celebrated the praise of God in a sublime strain, ver. 17.—And that Timothy might be animated to surmount the danger and difficulty of the work assigned to him, the Apostle informed him, that he had committed it to him by *prophecy*; that is, by a special impulse of the Spirit of God; and from that consideration urged him to carry on strenuously the good warfare against the false teachers, and against all his spiritual enemies, ver. 18.—by always holding the truth with a good conscience; which some teachers having put away, had made

shipwreck of themselves and of the gospel, ver. 19.—Of this sort were Hymeneus and Alexander, two noted Judaizing teachers, whom the apostle, after his departure from Ephesus, had delivered to Satan, that they might learn no more to blaspheme, ver. 20.

Ver. 1. Commandment of—Christ, which is our hope;] Appointment of—Christ our hope.

Ver. 2. My own son, &c.] It is not certain from the history that Timothy was converted by St. Paul: See Acts, xvi. 1, 2. It seems therefore that he calls him *his son*, to express the parental affection that he had for him, and the complacency he found in that assistance which he had received from him in the work of the ministry, and in the filial reverence and affection which this excellent young minister expressed to him. Nor can we doubt but Timothy had received much confirmation in Christianity from the apostle.

Ver. 4. Neither give heed to fables, &c.] Nothing can be conceived more monstrous and absurd than the *fables* with which the writings of the Jewish rabbies are filled. It is probable this wild romantic humour might in some measure prevail as early as the apostle's days, and may be referred to here. The Jewish Christians valued themselves very much upon their descent from Abraham and the prophets, though possibly some of them could hardly make out the whole genealogy: but if they could have done it ever so exactly, Christians were to regard no man according to the flesh, nor to reject or despise the Gentile Christians for want of such a genealogy or extraction. Holiness and love were chiefly to be looked after in a Christian: he who had these, had all that was truly valuable; and he who wanted them, was of no account in the sight of God.

Ver. 5. Now the end of the commandment, &c.] “The sum and great end of the Christian doctrine, or of the gospel, is love, &c.” See 1 Thess. v. 10. Philem. 20.

Ver. 7. Desiring to be teachers of the law;] The gospel alone was too simple a thing for the Judaizing Christians; and their partiality for the law of Moses was so great, that they not only considered the whole of it, even the ceremonial part, as obligatory upon themselves, but they would have imposed it upon the Gentile converts; though they understood not the grand design of the law with respect to the Jews, much less the freedom of the Gentile converts from any subjection to it. *The law was given because of transgressions*, or to restrain the Jews from idolatry, and other vices, and to prepare them for the reception of the Messiah and his gospel; when therefore the gospel

was

8 But we know that ¹ the law is good, if a man use it lawfully ;

9 Knowing this, that ^m the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the ⁿ lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers,

10 ^o For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is ^p contrary to sound doctrine ;

11 According to the ^q glorious gospel of the ^r blessed God, ^s which was committed to

my trust.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, ^t who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry ;

13 Who ^u was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious : but ^x I obtained mercy, because ^y I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was ^z exceeding abundant with ^a faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a ^b faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that ^c Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; ^d of whom I am chief.

¹ Rom. 7. 12. Pl. 119. 128. & 19. 7—10. Gal. 4. 24. ^m Gal. 3. 19. & 5. 23. Rom. 13. 3. ⁿ 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19—21. Hof. 4. 1, 2. Rev. 21. 8. & 22. 15. ^o Heb. 13. 4. Rom. 1. 26, 27. Lev. 18. 22. Exod. 21. 10. Deut. 24. 7. Rev. 21. 8, 27. & 22. 15. Zech. 5. 4. Hof. 4. 1, 2. & 10. 4. ^p Ch. 6. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 13. & 4. 3. Tit. 1. 9. & 2. 1. ^q 2 Cor. 3. 7—11. Pl. 138. 2. ^r 2 Cor. 4. 6, 15. Eph. 1. 6, 12, 14. Phil. 1. 11. ^s Ch. 6. 15. 2 Cor. 11. 31. Rom. 1. 25. & 9. 5. Neh. 9. 5. ^t 1 Theff. 2. 2, 4. Gal. 2. 7. Ch. 2. 7. Tit. 1. 3. Rom. 1. 5. 2 Cor. 5. 18—20. Eph. 3. 8. ^u Acts, 9. 21. 1 Cor. 7. 25. & 15. 10. 2 Cor. 3. 5. & 4. 1. 1 Theff. 2. 4. Ch. 2. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 17. ^x Acts, 8. 3. & 9. 1, 5, 13. & 22. 4. & 26. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 15. 9. Gal. 1. 13. Phil. 3. 6. ^y Ver. 14, 16. 1 Cor. 15. 8, 10. Rom. 5. 20, 21. ^z Luke, 23. 34. John. 9. 39, 41. Acts, 3. 17. 1 Cor. 2. 8. Mat. 12. 31. ^a Rom. 5. 20. 1 Cor. 15. 10. ^b 2 Tim. 1. 13. ^c 2 Tim. 1. 13. ^d 2 Tim. 1. 13. ^e Gal. 5. 6. 1 John, 4. 19. Luke, 4. 47. ^f Ch. 3. 1. & 4. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Tit. 3. 2, 8. ^g Mat. 9. 13. & 18. 11. Luke, 19. 10. Rom. 3. 24—26. & 5. 6—10. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. John, 1. 29, 36. Mat. 1. 21. & 20. 28. ^h 1 Cor. 15. 9. Eph. 3. 8.

was come, there was no longer any occasion for that severe tutor. The word Νομοδιδασκαλος means a *doctor of the law*, a *rabbi*, or *father*. See Luke, v. 17. Acts, v. 34.

Ver. 8. *If a man use it lawfully ;*] This plainly intimates, that there were some who abused the law, borrowing a pretence from it to condemn some of the best of men, and to subvert the gospel : and whereas some have represented St. Paul as an enemy to the law, he here denies and disproves the charge. The design of the Mosaic law was to direct the conduct of those to whom it was given, to humble them under a sense of their sins, and to lead them to an atoning Saviour ; but it could not be intended to save them by a perfect conformity to it, which was το αδυνατον, *what the law could not do*. Rom. viii. 3.

Ver. 9. *Knowing this, &c.*] The apostle's thought seems to be this, "That a law in the general,—(for there is no article, as in ver. 8. to determine or confine it to the Jewish law)—is chiefly intended to restrain men from actions injurious to the public : " what it says, therefore, chiefly relates to crimes, and their punishments ; but the genius of Christianity is so sublime, that while it brings us to an all-sufficient Saviour, it leads us to all the heights and depths of holiness and love—to a religion which is not supported by slavish fear, but governs the soul by the most liberal and noble principles which can influence and animate an intellectual being.

Ver. 10. *And if there be any other thing, &c.*] That was *sound doctrine*, in St. Paul's account, which condemned wicked practices and evil tempers, and promoted holiness and love ; that, therefore, must be *unsound doctrine*, which encourages the contrary practices, tempers, and experience : here then is a proper test or standard, given by an apostle, by which to judge of the soundness or unsoundness of any

doctrine. Some read, *To the sound doctrine*, (ver. 11.) *which is according, &c.*

Ver. 12. *Who hath enabled me,*] "Who hath qualified me with so many, and such extraordinary spiritual gifts and miraculous powers, to enable me for so great and blessed an undertaking." See Acts, i. 8. Doddridge renders it, "Who hath strengthened me for the arduous duties of such a calling."

Ver. 13. *But I obtained mercy, &c.*] It is not to be supposed that the apostle, by saying *because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief*, meant that his ignorance and unbelief were deserving ; or were a proper cause of his obtaining mercy : for it would be strange indeed to imagine, that there was any merit in an ignorance which was owing to a wilful rejection of the clearest means of knowledge ; and in unbelief, which is itself a heinous sin, with an entail of damnation upon it, under the light of the gospel : accordingly the apostle in the next words speaks with high admiration of *the grace of the Lord Jesus*, as *exceeding abundant towards him*, who considered himself as *the chief of sinners* : but his ignorance and unbelief did not shut him out of the sphere of mercy, as it left him a capable subject of it, according to the grace of the gospel ; whereas, had his blasphemy and persecutions been maliciously practised, contrary to his knowledge and belief of Christ's being the true Messiah, they would have amounted to the unpardonable sin.

Ver. 14. *With faith and love*] When he was a bigotted Jew, he had no love to the Christians, or to the Gentiles, nor any true love to God ; but love soon followed faith in Christ Jesus : the benevolent spirit of Christianity, accompanied with the power of divine grace, sweetened his temper, regenerated his soul, and altered his conduct.

Ver. 15. *Of whom I am chief.*] As distance diminishes objects

16 Howbeit for this cause * I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, † for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 † Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wife God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 † This charge I commit unto thee, son

Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare ;

19 † Holding faith and a good conscience ; † which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck :

20 † Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander ; whom I have † delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

* Ver. 13. If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. Jer. 31. 20. † Acts, 13. 39. Heb. 7. 25. John, 6. 37. If. 1. 18. & 55. 1. 7. † Chr. 29. 11. Pl. 16. 16. & 145. 3. Dan. 7. 9. 14. † John, 4. 12. John, 1. 18. Heb. 11. 27. Rom. 1. 23. & 16. 27. Ch. 6. 16. Jude, 25. † Ver. 3. 10. Ch. 1. 14. & 6. 12, 13. 2 Tim. 2. 3. & 4. 1, 7. Philem. 1. Phil. 2. 25. Eph. 6. 12. 2 Cor. 10. 3—5. Gal. 4. 24. † Ch. 3. 9. Phil. 1. 27. & 3. 16. & 4. 1. Jude, 1. Prov. 23. 23. Rev. 2. 13. & 3. 3, 8, 10, 11. Tit. 1. 9. † Phil. 3. 18, 19. see ver. 4. 6. Ch. 6. 3—6. † 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Acts, 20. 29. † John, 2. 19. † 2 Tim. 2. 17. & 4. 14, 15. Acts, 19. 33. † 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. & 4. 21. & 11. 32. 2 Cor. 10. 6. & 13. 7, 10. Mal. 18. 17.

objects to the fight, and nearness magnifies them, so to holy men their own faults appear greater than those of others; and truth is not injured by expressions which humility suggests, because they speak their real sentiments.

Ver. 17. *Unto the king eternal, &c.*] It has been thought that in giving such titles to the true God here, St. Paul, among various other reasons, might possibly glance at the absurdity of idolatrous Ephesus, in worshipping such a visible corruptible image as that of Diana. The apostle therefore plainly intimated, that God is God alone, and there is none besides him.

Ver. 18. *According to the prophecies, &c.*] “That according to the predictions made concerning you, you may exert yourself with success in this conflict.” See Ch. iv. 14.

Ver. 19. *Holding faith and a good conscience ;*] “Retaining the great principles of the Christian faith in power, and with it the exercise of a good conscience.”

Ver. 20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander ;*] Probably this Alexander is the person mentioned Acts, xix. 33. who might become worse and worse after St. Paul’s departure from Ephesus, emboldened thereto by his absence : so that the apostle might now be determined to deliver him up to Satan ; that is,—according to the extraordinary apostolic power with which God had invested him for such purposes,—to inflict upon him certain pains and evils which might possibly under divine grace reclaim him. See 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. iv. 14.

Inferences.—How solemn and important, honourable and delightful, is the trust which God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ have committed to gospel-ministers ! how thankful should they be for it, and how desirous of an abundance of grace and mercy from these Divine Persons, to help, pity, and prosper them, that they may be supported under their numerous trials from without and from within, and enabled to be faithful in their Lord’s work, according to the qualifications that he has given them, and the reasonable expectations which they afford. They may indeed meet with many virulent and subtle adversaries ; some, furious persecutors like Paul before his conversion ; others, apostates like Hymeneus and Alexander ; and others, who would propagate fabulous traditions and strange doctrines, and

introduce doubtful disputations and vain janglings, to the overthrowing of the faith of many, instead of promoting spiritual edification. But as all such are to be shunned and rejected, while the truly sincere and pious are to be affectionately loved as genuine children in the faith, with what courage may the servants of Christ stand to their charge, in which they are called to war a good warfare ! and with what pleasure may they recommend the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in hopes that other sinners, by their preaching, may embrace the same offers and the same grace which have been proposed and bestowed upon them ! for they well know, and can assure all around them, on the credit of a divine testimony, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save even the chief of sinners. O wondrous, superabounding grace ! It turns the hearts, and pardons the sins of blasphemers, persecutors, and injurious persons, and frees them from the condemnation of the law, which does not stand in force against those who are righteous through faith in Christ, but only against obstinate, impenitent unbelievers, who persist in ungodliness and immorality, which are forbidden by the good and holy law of God, and are equally contrary to the sound doctrine of the gospel. But how should sinners tremble at the thought of continuing to oppose and reject the gospel, and of making a wrong use of the law : and how folicitous should preachers and hearers be, that they may live under the power of evangelical love, as proceeding from a sanctified heart ; and also, that unfeigned faith and a good conscience may be always preserved together ; lest, by violating conscience, they soon make shipwreck of faith ! and with what gratitude and praise should all who are experimentally acquainted with Christ, according to the gospel revelation of him, unite their adorations of him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as he in his divine nature is inseparably one with them, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wife God ! to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have in this chapter, 1. The apostolical inscription. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, to bear a special witness to him ; who was not invested with this office by the authority of men ; but was called by Christ himself to fulfil it among the Gentiles, not

CHAP. II.

That it is meet to pray and give thanks for all men, and the reason why. How women should be attired: they are not permitted to teach: they shall be saved notwithstanding the testimonies of God's wrath in child-birth, if they continue in faith.

[Anno Domini 58.]

I * EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, * supplications, prayers, intercessions, and

giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and for all that are in † authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life ^b in all godliness and honesty.

3 ^c For this is good and acceptable in the sight of ^d God our Saviour;

4 ^e Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

* Or *dr. fire.* † Or *eminent place.* ^b Acts, 24. 16. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Luke. 1. 6. 1 Thess. 2. 10. Tit. 2. 10—12. & 3. 8, 14. Rom. 12. 10—21. & 13. 1—14. Eph. iv—vi. Col. iii. iv. 1 Thess. v. 1 Pet. ii. iii. ^c Eph. 4. 1. & 5. 9, 10. Col. 1. 10, 12. Phil. 1. 11. & 4. 8, 18. Heb. 13. 16. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 20. Ch. 5. 4. 1 Thess. 4. 1, 3, 7. ^d Ch. 1. 1. & 4. 10. Lu. 9. 1. 47. Tit. 1. 3. & 2. 10, 13. & 3. 4. Jude, 25. Deut. 32. 15. 1 Sam. 2. 1. 1f. 12. 2. & 5. 17, 22. ^e 1f. 55. 1, 7. Ezek. 18. 23. John. 3. 16. Tit. 2. 11. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Rom. 3. 29, 30. Gal. 3. 28. Col. 3. 11. Mal. 1. 11.

not according to his own desires, but according to the grace, commandment, and pleasure of God the Father—sends greeting; and the beloved Timothy, a faithful brother in the ministry, concurs in all that is hereafter written.

2. His salutation. *Grace, mercy, and peace, be with you, from God our Father, in whose love we have a common interest; and Jesus Christ our Lord, who bought us with his blood, and called us to the obedience of the faith.*

3. He reminds him of the design that he had in leaving him at Ephesus, and exhorts him to be faithful to his charge. *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; even those Judaizing teachers, who would corrupt the simplicity of the gospel; be faithful to thy trust, and warn the people to beware of these seducers; neither to give heed to fables, their absurd traditions, and endless genealogies; affecting to trace up their descent from Abraham and the patriarchs, and valuing themselves highly on such an ancestor; which minister questions, and endless disputes, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.* *Note;* (1.) Unedifying disputes about unessential matters have the most pernicious tendency to destroy vital religion. (2.) There can be no true godliness, but what springs from faith as its principle. (3.) Ministers must watch over the flock, and guard them from the inroads of error, as well as impiety. (4.) Broachers of new doctrines, contrary to the fundamental articles of faith, should receive from the bishops of the church deserved rebuke.

2dly, Having repeated the charge before given to Timothy, concerning the deluding teachers, he

1. Directs him what end he should aim at, the preservation of the church's peace. *Now the end of the commandment, (either of the moral law, or of the gospel, or of the charge which the apostle had given him,) is to promote charity, or love towards God and man, flowing out of a pure heart, sanctified by the blessed Spirit; and of a good conscience, purged from dead works by the blood of sprinkling, and of faith unfeigned, the radical grace, whence love and every other divine temper spring: from all which some having swerved, and wandering wide of the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling, trifling questions, and idle disputes; desiring to be teachers of the law; setting up for great wisdom, as interpreters of it, and zealous to urge the observation of its rites upon the Gentiles, as necessary*

to salvation; *understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm; real strangers to its spiritual nature, use, and design.* *Note;* (1.) Love in the heart is the great preservative from all disputes and dissensions. (2.) It is a sad consideration, when ignorant men intrude into the ministry, strangers to the oracles of God, and unacquainted with all the truths themselves in which they pretend to instruct others.

2. The right use of the law is here declared. *But, however abused it may be, we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, and apply it to the purposes for which God gave it,—to convince the conscience of sin; to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ; and, though ceasing to be a covenant of works, yet continuing to be a rule and law of duty, according to which God will proceed in his judgment at the last day: knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, nor does the damning sentence of it lie against any faithful soul; but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unbelievers and profane, who with daring impudence and wilful obstinacy transgress it, &c. and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; all which, and every other crime, the law condemns; and the judgment denounced by the law is according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust; there being the most perfect agreement in this respect between the law and the gospel, which condemns all ungodliness, and teaches us to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present evil world.* *Note;* The gospel is an awful glorious trust; and while we bless God for the honour that he puts upon us in committing it to our charge, we need tremble for ourselves, lest we should be found unfaithful.

3dly, The apostle with deep gratitude acknowledges the distinguishing favour shewn him of God, not only in calling him to the knowledge of his grace, but in putting him in trust with the gospel, and qualifying him for the discharge of it. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.* *Note;* (1.) None are Christ's ministers, but those whom he puts into their office. (2.) Whom he calls, he qualifies for the discharge of their ministry. (3.) Want of ministerial abilities is a sure proof that men run without being sent.

1. The apostle humbly owns the dreadful state out of which by divine grace he was called; *who was before a blasphemer*

5 For *there is* ^f one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 ^g Who gave himself a ransom for all, ^h to be testified in ⁱ due time.

^f Deut. 6. 4. 1f. 44. 6. John, 17. 3. Rom. 3. 29, 30. & 10. 12. 1 Cor. 8. 6. Gal. 3. 20. Heb. 9. 15. & 8. 6. with Job, 9. 33. ^g Mat. 20. 28. John, 10. 15. Mark, 14. 24. 1f. 53. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 21. Eph. 5. 2. & 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 18. Rev. 5. 9. Heb. 9. 12. Titus, 2. 14. Heb. 2. 9. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. 1 John, 2. 1, 2. & 4. 10. ^h Or a *ransom*. 1 Cor. 1. 6. ⁱ Gal. 4. 4. Eph. 1. 10. & 3. 5. Rom. 16. 26. Col. 1. 26. 2 Tim. 1. 11.

blasphemer of Christ and his gospel, and a persecutor of his people, and injurious, branding the Christian name with every malignant aspersion. *Note*; (1.) The depth of our guilt serves to magnify but the more the riches of divine grace in our pardon and salvation. (2.) True converts are ever ready to take shame to themselves, and to own their former abominations with deep regret.

2. God had mercy on him. *But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*; I did it not against knowledge, for I verily thought I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus, Acts, xxvi. 9. and yet, notwithstanding this, *the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, beyond all conception wonderful, that it should be extended to such a wretch as me; *with faith, and love, which is in Christ Jesus*, and which in the richest measure the Lord was pleased to bestow upon my soul. So that from the happiest experience I can now declare, that *this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*: none, therefore, after the mercy which I have received, need despair. *Howbeit*, notwithstanding my enormous guilt, *for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, or the chief of sinners, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*; encouraging the vilest to hope and return to him, as being still willing and able to save to the uttermost. *Note*; (1.) Unbelief is at the bottom of every evil. (2.) The chief of sinners may be saved as freely as the least: those only perish, who will not come to Christ that they may have life. (3.) They who are discouraged under a sense of the greatness of their sins, should remember those who have already found mercy, and from the deepest crimes have risen to the greatest heights of grace; witness David, Manasseh, Peter, and this apostle.

4thly, The apostle repeats his charge to Timothy. *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee*, which held thee forth as one who would be called to an eminent station in the church of God; *that, remembering these things, thou mightest be quickened to correspond therewith, and by them mightest war a good warfare*; as a faithful soldier of Christ, manfully fighting under his banner against sin and error; *holding faith, firmly attached to the purity of the gospel doctrines, and maintaining a good conscience, void of offence towards God and man; which some having put away, rejected and thrust from them, concerning faith have made shipwreck, and apostatized from the life of God; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, those notorious heretics, whom I have delivered unto Satan*; by my apostolic power assigning them over to that tormentor, to inflict upon them severe chastisement; *that they may learn not to blaspheme*, and that by their sufferings they may be brought to a conviction of their sins, or, at least, be so terrified, as not to dare any

longer to persist in their horrid blasphemies. *Note*; (1.) We are now engaged in a dangerous warfare, and the ministers of Christ especially will meet with the strongest opposition. We have need therefore to hold fast by him who is our strength, that we may stand in the evil day. (2.) None usually turn out so dreadfully, and become such horrid blasphemers, as those who apostatize from the genuine doctrines of the gospel, and from the experience of true religion.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter, the apostle first of all gave Timothy a rule according to which the public worship of God was to be performed in the church of Ephesus. And in delivering that rule, he shewed an example of great faithfulness to the cause of divine truth. For without fearing the rage of the Jewish zealots, who contended that no person could be saved who did not embrace the institutions of Moses, he ordered public prayers to be made for men of all nations and religions, ver. 1.—for kings, and for all in authority, notwithstanding they were heathens, that the disciples of Christ, shewing themselves good subjects by praying for the Roman magistrates, might be allowed in peace to worship the only true God according to their conscience, ver. 2.—Thus to pray for all men, the apostle assured Timothy is acceptable to God our Saviour, ver. 3.—Who hath provided the means of salvation for all men, ver. 4. and is equally related to all men, as their Creator and Governor, and as the object of their worship; and is also related to all men, as their Mediator and Saviour, according to their dispensations, ver. 5.—having offered himself a ransom for all: a doctrine, the proof of which, the apostle told Timothy, was now in its clearest light set before the world in its proper season, ver. 6.—by many preachers, and especially by Paul himself, who was appointed a herald, to proclaim, and to prove, that joyful doctrine, ver. 7.

But because the Jews fancied that prayers offered up in the Jewish synagogues and prayer-houses, but especially in the temple at Jerusalem, were more acceptable to God, than prayers offered up any where else; also because the heathens were tainted with the same superstition concerning prayers offered in their temples, the apostle ordered that prayers should be made by men in every place, from a pure heart, without wrath, and without disputings about the seasons and places of prayer, ver. 8. From which it is plain, that not the time when, nor the place where, prayers are made, but the dispositions of mind with which they are made, render them, through Christ, acceptable to God.—Next, he ordered women, when joining in the public worship of God, to appear in decent apparel, adorned with the ornaments of modesty and purity of manners, and not with gold and silver and costly raiment, ver. 9.—It seems there were in Ephesus some ladies who had embraced

7 ^k Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (^l I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that ⁿ men pray every where, ^o lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that ^o women adorn

^k See Rom. 1. 1, 5. & 11. 13. & 15, 16, 19. Acts, 9. 15. & 13. 2, 3. & 22. 21. & 26. 16—18. Gal. 1. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 11. Eph. 3. 8. ^l Rom. 1. 9. & 9. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 18, 23. & 11. 11, 31. Gal. 1. 20. 2 Theff. 2. 5, 10. ^m Pf. 65. 2. Mal. 1. 11. John, 4. 21—24. ⁿ Pf. 134. 1. If. 1. 15. Mat. 5. 24. & 16. 12, 14, 15. Phil. 2. 14. James, 1. 6. Heb. 11. 15. ^o Titus, 2. 3, 5. 1 Pet. 3. 3—5. If. 3. 16—26. Zeph. 1. 8.

braced the gospel, to whom this injunction was necessary. These were to adorn themselves with good works, ver. 10.—And, because some of the Ephesian women preached and prayed in the public assemblies in presence of the men, the apostle strictly forbade that practice, as inconsistent with the subordinate state of women, who are not to usurp authority over men, ver. 11, 12.—For the inferiority of the woman to the man, God shewed, by creating the man before the woman, ver. 13.—Besides, that women should not teach men, but be taught by them, is, in the general suitable to that inferiority of understanding in this present life, of which their mother Eve gave a melancholy proof, when she was deceived by the devil into transgression, ver. 14.—Nevertheless, for the comfort of pious women, the apostle observed, that as a woman brought ruin upon mankind by yielding to the temptation of the devil; so a woman, by bringing forth the Saviour, has been the occasion of the salvation of mankind, ver. 15.

Ver. 4. *Who will have all men to be saved,*] It is here asserted by an inspired apostle, that God desireth the salvation of all men; and, in order to their being capable of higher degrees of glory and happiness, would have them embrace the gospel, wherever it is preached, and become members of his preparatory kingdom. This is a pleasing thought, and cannot but be highly grateful to all benevolent minds: and if it should be inquired, “Why then are not all men saved?—Is not God infinite in power?—Cannot he effect what he desires?”—The proper answer would be, that God is undoubtedly infinite in power, and therefore able to do whatsoever he pleases; but, that his manner of dealing with *intelligent* creatures, and with the *inanimate* part of the creation, is very different; because the state of the creatures themselves is very different. In the *natural*, or *inanimate* world, God, by his mighty power, effecteth whatever he desireth; and therein he acts according to the nature of inanimate things, which are entirely passive: but should he act after the same manner with *intelligent beings*, to whom, through his grace, he gives the offer of eternal happiness or eternal misery, heaven or hell, he would destroy their make; and treat them like what they are not, mere inanimate and passive creatures;—a thing which infinite wisdom can never do. Should he attempt to *force* sinners to become penitent and holy, the very force would destroy the nature of their holiness, and render it as improper to reward them, as it would be to reward a clock for going right, when all the wheels, and springs, and weights, were in their due order and situation. And if God sincerely desire the salvation of all, it is necessary that so wise and good a Being should in the present state of mankind, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath, offer to all, such a measure of his grace, as is sufficient to bring

all who duly improve it to the eternal enjoyment of himself in glory: without which, indeed, it is not easy to see how the wicked, who finally perish, can be left without excuse. But when he deals with intelligent beings in this state of trial according to the use or abuse of his free grace, which alone gives them a free choice,—a power to stand or fall; it is not difficult to account for the perishing of such multitudes, even though God would have all men to be saved. The declaration of the divine benevolence to all mankind, is here subjoined as a reason why the Christians were to pray for all men: if God was ready to *save them*, surely they ought to be ready to *pray for them*. But it was also peculiarly designed as an oblique reproof of the Judaizing Christians, for their bigotry to their own nation, and their contempt of the Gentile Christians, or Gentiles in general. St. Paul here lets them know, that God judgeth otherwise, and therefore *they* ought to do so. *He* makes no distinction under the gospel between Jew and Gentile; and *they* ought to imitate the divine benevolence.

Ver. 5. *The man Christ Jesus;*] Christ's being styled *man*, when spoken of as the Mediator between God and men, is no more an argument against his being also *God*, in the discharge of that office; than its being at other times said, that, “the Lord of glory was crucified, and God purchased the church with his own blood,” (1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts, xx. 28.), is an argument against his being *man*, in his sufferings and bloodshed: and as he is expressly called the *one mediator*, this must exclude all others, such as saints and angels, which the papists set up, and idolatrously worship as their mediators; in like manner as the heathens had set up many mediators, to pacify and intercede with their superior gods.

Ver. 6. *Who gave himself*] That is, cheerfully and willingly. See John, x. 18. *For all*, is added for the same reason as *all men* in ver. 4. *To be testified in due time*, is, according to the Greek, *a testimony to his own times*. Jesus Christ is called *a faithful witness*, Rev. i. 5. and is said to have *witnessed before Pilate a good confession*; 1 Tim. vi. 13. Some would connect this with the next verse thus;—*A ransom for all: a doctrine to be borne witness to in due time; of which I am appointed a preacher, &c.* See 2 Tim. i. 11.

Ver. 7. (*I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not*;)] St. Paul uses such solemnity in asserting this doctrine, because the Jews were so much averse to it, and were ready to charge his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, either upon the want of a due regard to his own nation, or some view of avarice or ambition; looking upon the Gentiles as the most detestable creatures, and probably growing more inveterate against them in proportion to the degree in which they were compelled to permit them to dwell in their own holy land, and often to associate with them.

Ver. 8. *Lifting up holy hands, &c.*] The *lifting up of hands*

themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with * brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with ^p good works.

11 ^q Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in

silence.

13 ^r For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 ^s And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 ^t Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

* Or *plaited*. ^p Prov. 31. 31. Luke, 1. 6. Acts, 9. 36. Ch. 5. 10. ^q 1 Cor. 14. 30. Gen. 3. 16. Eph. 5. 22, 24, 33. Col. 3. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 4. ^r Gen. 1. 27. & 2. 7, 18, 22. 1 Cor. 11. 8, 9. ^s Gen. 3. 6, 13. 2 Cor. 11. 3. ^t If. 7. 14. & 9. 6. Jer. 31. 22. Mat. 1. 25. Luke, 2. 7. Gal. 4. 4. 5. or ch. 4. 3. & 5. 10, 14. Titus, 2. 5. with Gen. 3. 16.

hands in prayer was a very antient custom. See Exod. xvii. 11. Pf. cxxxiv. 2. cxli. 2. Isai. i. 15. Lam. iii. 41. The expression of *holy hands* may allude to the custom of washing their hands before solemn prayer, which prevailed among the Jews; that they might hereby express their desire of inward purity: and the caution against *wrath* might be more suitable, as the many injuries which the Christians received from their persecutors, might tempt them to some imprecations against them, not agreeable to the gentle and benign genius of their holy religion. The apostle might likewise have a view to those *imprecatory prayers* which the Jews made use of against the Christians, — of which some *forms* are still extant in their ritual. In this sense the apostle may be understood as endeavouring to restrain all Christians from copying so malignant a temper. Some render the phrase *χωρίς διαλογισμῶν*, without debate, disputing, or contention; but the common interpretation seems preferable, as it suggests another very important thought, different from that inferred by the word *wrath*; namely, the absolute necessity of *faith* in prayer.

Ver. 9, 10. In like manner also,] Dr. Heylin reads the verses thus: *And also that the women [in your assemblies] be dressed decently, adorning themselves with bashfulness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, &c. ver. 10. but with good works, as it becometh women professing piety; that is, the Christian religion. The apostle often uses piety or godliness as synonymous with Christianity. See ver. 2. Estius observes, that this discourse concludes with yet stronger force against all foppery in men.*

Ver. 12. I suffer not a woman to teach,] The apostle must be understood as limiting this restraint to public assemblies. See 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

Ver. 13. Adam was first formed,] It is plain that the apostle does not mean to put the whole of his argument upon the priority of the man's creation in point of *time*; for, on that principle, the birds and beasts would have the pre-eminence even of Adam; but he refers only to the human species, and to the regard which God expressed for the ease and comfort of man, by making the woman to be his helpmate and companion. So that it is the same thought, in fewer words, which is expressed more fully, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. *The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.*

Ver. 14. And Adam was not deceived,] *Not first deceived.* The apostle hereby seems to intimate, that the tempter

chose to make his first attack on the woman, as being, even in her original and most glorious state, the *inferior*, and consequently less fit in future life to take the lead in important affairs. The verse may be paraphrased thus: "It is further to be recollected, that, at the fatal entrance of sin into the world, Adam was not immediately deceived by the fraud of the serpent; but that artful seducer chose to begin his attack on the woman; who, being deceived by him, was first in the transgression, and prevailed upon Adam by her solicitations to offend." Now it should be a humbling consideration to all her daughters, that their sex was so greatly concerned in the introduction of guilt and misery, and make them less forward in attempting to be guides to others, after "such a miscarriage."

Ver. 15. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing,] Many and various are the interpretations of this obscure passage. Mr. Locke understands it of being carried safely through child-bearing; which sense Dr. Whitby endeavours to illustrate at large. See on Rom. vii. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 15. Dr. Benson observes, "Having intimated that the man was superior by creation, and the subjection of the woman increased by the fall, the apostle here declares, that if the Christian women continued in holiness and charity, the curse pronounced upon the fall, Gen. iii. 16. would be removed or mitigated." Instead of *in child-bearing*, some render the Greek, *by child-birth*; namely, by the birth of the Messiah; an interpretation, which Dr. Doddridge adopts, "as, on attentive deliberation, the most probable." His paraphrase is as follows: "Yet, let them not be despised or upbraided on this account; considering, on the other side, that she was also happily instrumental in producing the great promised Seed, (Gen. iii. 15.) who was derived from a woman without any human father; and so they shall be saved, as I may say, by child-birth, if there be a suitable readiness not only to profess, but to obey the gospel: — if they continue, &c." See the Introduction to this chapter.

Inferences. How abundantly richer are the privileges of believers under the gospel dispensation than under the Mosaic! and this glorious dispensation has been offered both to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, greater and lesser sinners, in a far more extensive manner than the other was: and, blessed be God! multitudes have come
4 D 2
under

C H A P. III.

How bishops, and deacons, and their wives, should be qualified; and to what end Saint Paul wrote to Timothy of these things. Of the church, and the blessed truth therein taught and professed.

[Anno Domini 58.]

THIS ^a is a true saying, If a man desire ^b the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

^a Ch. 1. 15. & 4. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Titus, 1. 3. 8. ^b Act. 1. 20. & 20. 28. Phil. 1. 1. Ch. 1. 11, 12. 2 Tim. 1. 11. Ch. 2. 7. & 5. 17. 1 Pet. 3. 2. Eph. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. ^c Titus, 1. 6—9. 2 Tim. 2. 20. Rom. 12. 13. Ch. 4. 12. ^d Titus, 1. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 24. 1 Pet. 5. 2. Jf. 56. 10—12. Micah, 7. 5. Lev. 10. 9. Jer. 9. 13. Titus, 3. 2. Ezek. 44. 21. ^e Or *modest*. ^f Or *not ready to quarrel and offer wrong at one in wine*. ^g Gen. 18. 19. Jofh. 24. 15. Pf. 101. 2—8. Titus, 1. 6.

under this high dispensation to the saving knowledge of Christ, who is the only Mediator between the offended God and offending man; and who freely gave himself up to death, as a price of redemption, to satisfy divine justice for all that will perseveringly believe in him, to save them from sin, and from the wrath to come. What a blessed and encouraging ground of hope, and of prayer, does this chapter afford for kings, and governors, and people; that, by the means of a gospel-ministry, which Christ has appointed to testify his atoning death, they may be brought to know and believe in him, though at present they be strangers and enemies to him! and how pleasing to God is it, that Christians, on all occasions, whenever they are engaged in divine worship, without regard to any distinction of places, be importunate in prayer and hearty in thanksgivings, for their political governors, for they are ordained of God for the good of the community, that, under their protection and favour, we may live in quiet possession of our religious and civil rights, and have full liberty for the discharge of all moral and Christian duties!

Women, as well as men, are to behave with decency in public worship, like persons professing godliness; they ought not to deck themselves with splendid attire; they ought not to set their hearts on fine and sumptuous drefs, but on the infinitely richer and brighter ornaments of virtue and grace, and abounding in every good work: and remembering the rank in which God has placed their sex by the laws of creation; and after the fall, in which the woman was first in the transgression, they should take heed of every thing that looks like an affectation of superiority over the man, and be silent learners with due subjection, and not preachers in the church: and as ever they would be comforted under the dismal effects of the fall, and be carried safe through the sorrows and dangers of child-bearing, and get at last to heaven, it behoves them to live in the exercise of faith and love, chastity, holiness, and sobriety: for, blessed be God, here is a promise of rich mercy to such.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle exhorts,

1. That *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made in the church for all ranks and conditions of men; particularly for kings, and for all that are in authority, the inferior magistrates, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, protected from all violence and injuries;*

2. *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, * of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

3. *† Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

4. *One that ruleth well his own house,*

and, *in all godliness and honesty, evincing our unfeigned piety to God, and our unimpeached integrity towards men.*

2. He suggests the strongest reasons to support his exhortations. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who enjoins universal charity, and will have all men to be saved; as many of all nations, ranks, and conditions, Gentiles as well as Jews, high and low, rich and poor, as will accept of his salvation, and yield to be saved by grace; and, in order thereunto, has sent out his gospel to call them, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth, by the faith of which only salvation can be obtained. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who, though very God, hath taken our nature into personal union with himself, and, in his glorified body, stands as the alone Mediator before the throne, to make the persons, prayers, and services of his believing people accepted: Who gave himself a ransom for all, paying down the price of our redemption in the drops of his own most precious blood, and thereby making a full satisfaction to divine justice for sinners of every condition and degree, as was foretold by the prophets, and to be testified in due time to all nations. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, by a divine commission, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not, as the heart-searching God doth bear me witness), a teacher of the Gentiles, to whom especially I am sent, in faith and verity, to bring them to the true faith of Christ; and this office I labour to discharge with all simplicity and faithfulness. Note; (1.) It is God's will that we should pray for others as well as for ourselves. (2.) Our encouragement to draw near to a throne of grace is this, that we have one Mediator there, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. (3.) Since Jesus hath paid, and God hath accepted the ransom, all that perseveringly plead it, have a right to the eternal redemption thereby provided. (4.) It is an inestimable blessing to enjoy the light of the gospel, and to sit under the ministry of those who preach it in faith and verity.*

3. He directs them how to pray. *I will therefore that men, who bear the Christian name, pray every where; not confined to any particular place, since God is alike present in all; in the closet, in the family, as well as in the great congregation: only when we draw near to him, if we would obtain acceptance, we must be found lifting up holy hands, not polluted with allowed sin, but washed in the atoning Blood, without wrath and doubting; since harboured*

having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the

malice, unbelieving distrust of God, and a contentious spirit, must necessarily destroy the efficacy of prayer.

2dly, The apostle directs how women professing godliness should behave.

1. With modesty. *In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.* What a contrast to this description are our manners! Yet the truly gracious woman will still think modesty her brightest ornament; and when fashion imposes ought that is fantastical, extravagant, or immodest, will dare to disobey.

2. *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; not presuming to be speakers in the house of God, but hearers; for I suffer not a woman to teach in public, nor to usurp authority over the man, by that or any other instance of affected superiority; but to be in silence.* For Adam was first formed, then Eve, from his side (Gen. ii. 21.), to denote her inferiority. And Adam was not deceived by the serpent, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression; and he, seduced by her, or out of fond affection determined to die with her, wilfully followed her example. *Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, amidst all the anguish which flows from the sentence pronounced on her (Gen. iii. 16); and through that child which is born of woman, the adored Immanuel, she shall obtain everlasting salvation; if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety, and prove themselves, and continue living members of Christ, in whom there is no difference between male or female, but both are alike called to partake of his grace and glory.*

C H A P. III.

BECAUSE many false teachers were now spreading their erroneous doctrines with great assiduity among the Ephesians, St. Paul judged it necessary that Timothy, to whom he had committed the care of the church at Ephesus, should be assisted by a number of bishops and deacons, well qualified to teach the people. Wherefore, after observing what an honourable office that of a Christian bishop is, ver. 1.—he described the qualities, graces, and virtues necessary in one who aspires to attain it; whereby it appears, that an able and faithful Christian bishop is a person most venerable on account of his character, as well as on account of his office, ver. 2—7.—In like manner, the apostle described the qualifications, graces, and virtues, necessary in a Christian deacon, ver. 8, 9.—and that none might be appointed to these offices, who were not of a good character, and duly qualified, he ordered them to be *proved*, that is, to be duly examined, and their names to be published to the people, that if any person had ought to say against them, he might have an opportunity to speak it. And if no accuser appeared, and in all other respects they were duly qualified, they were to be considered as of an unblemished reputation, and were to be invested with the proposed office, ver. 10. He next gives the character of the wives of those who were worthy to fill the office

of deacons, ver. 11.—Farther, by observing that the deacons who performed their office well, purchased to themselves a good degree, the apostle, I think, insinuated, that the most faithful of the deacons might be raised to higher offices in the church, ver. 13.—These things he wrote to Timothy concerning the doctrine that he was to teach, the errors he was to confute, the manner of performing the public worship, the behaviour and dress of the women in their assemblies for worship, and the character and qualifications of the persons whom Timothy was to ordain bishops and deacons, notwithstanding he hoped to come to him soon, ver. 14.—Or, if any incident in the course of Providence, prevented his coming, having written these things in this letter, Timothy might know in what manner to behave himself in *the house*, or temple of God, now committed to his care: which therefore was neither the temple at Jerusalem, far less that at Ephesus, but the church of Christ at Ephesus, consisting of all in that city who believed. And to excite Timothy to be diligent in teaching true doctrine, zealous in opposing error, and cautious in ordaining persons to sacred offices, he told him, that as the true living Christian church is the temple in which the living God is worshipped, and the knowledge of true religion preserved, and the practice of holiness maintained, it is actually the pillar and support of the truth, ver. 15.—By giving that honourable appellation to the Christian church, the apostle insinuates, as suitable to the people under Timothy's care, that therein are kept, not the false mysteries of any of the heathen gods, but the infinitely glorious *mystery of godliness*, or true religion, to be made known, not to a few initiated persons as the heathen mysteries were, but to all mankind.—Lastly, to shew the greatness of the mystery of godliness which is kept in the true living Christian church, the apostle explained the particulars of which it consists, ver. 16.—Thus, by tacitly contrasting the Christian church with the temple of Ephesus, and with even that of Jerusalem, and by displaying the infinitely more noble purposes for which it was erected, the apostle has shewed how vastly superior it is to all the most magnificent material fabrics, which have ever been reared for the worship of God by the hands of men.

Ver. 2. A bishop then must be blameless,] With respect to his moral character. The priests under the law were to be without bodily infirmities, Lev. xxi. 16, &c. The bishops in the Christian church are to be of unblemished hearts and lives, Tit. i. 6, 7.—*the husband of one wife;* that is, “one who has not causelessly divorced his wife, “and married another;” much less ought he to have more than one wife at a time. See ver. 12. Some understand the apostle here as prohibiting *second marriages* in the clergy; but the interpretation above given appears the most just and reasonable. Which way soever the sentence be interpreted, it plainly condemns the practice of the church of Rome, which allows not bishops or clergy to marry at all: surely that can never be consistent with a bishop's *being the husband of one wife*.—We have in the course of this commentary, frequently observed, that in the Eastern country there were few houses of public entertainment;

church of God)?

6 Not ^f a novice, lest ^s being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover ^h he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise *must* ⁱ the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 ^k Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also ^l first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found*

blameless.

11 ^m Even so *must their wives be grave*, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be ⁿ the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 ^o For they that have ^{*} used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

14 These things write I unto thee, ^p hoping to come unto thee shortly;

15 But if I tarry long, ^q that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in

^f Or one newly come to the faith. Numb. 4. 3. 1 Sam. 1. 24. 1 Pet. 2. 2. 6. 2 Pet. 2. 4. Mat. 25. 41. 1f. 14. 13. ^h Acts, 12. 42. & 6. 3. 1 Sam. 2. 24. 1 Cor. 5. 12. 1 Thess. 4. 12. ⁱ Phil. 1. 1. Acts, 6. 3. 5, 6. see ver. 2, 3. Lev. 10. 9. Ezek. 44. 21. ^k Ch. 1. 19. Tit. 1. 9. Rev. 3. 10, 11. Prov. 23. 23. Jude, 1. 3. Phil. 1. 27. Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 22, 23. 2 John, 4. 9, 10. 3 John, 4. ^l Ch. 5. 22. 1 John, 4. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 2. Acts, 6. 3. ^m Ch. 5. 9. Rom. 10. 1. Tit. 2. 3, 4. Ch. 2. 10. ⁿ Ver. 2. Tit. 2. 6. Prov. 22. 6. Gen. 18. 19. Josh. 24. 15. Pf. ci. ^o Rom. 12. 8. Mat. 25. 21. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Acts, 23. 1. & 24. 16. ^p Or ministered. ^q Ch. 4. 13. 1 Cor. 11. 34. 2 John, 12. 3 John, 14. Phil. 1. 24. ^r Mat. 24. 41. & 13. 52.

tertainment; and therefore, though *hospitality* is at all times highly commendable in all, and especially in bishops and ministers of the gospel, there was the more necessity that the houses of *bishops* should at that time be famed for it, and always open to such as travelled about in order to spread the gospel.

Ver. 3. *No striker, &c.*] Instead of *no striker*, Dr. Heylin reads, *not violent*; —not a lover of contention, or one who has so little government of himself, as passionately to fly out against others.

Ver. 4, 5. *One that ruleth well his own house,*] One that was a good *πρωτοκλήτης*, president, over his own family; which was one of the qualifications necessary for *ὁ ἐπισκοπος*, an inspector or bishop over the church of God.

Ver. 6. *Not a novice, &c.*] *Μὴ νεόφυτος*; “Not one lately engrafted into the Christian church.” He had said before, ver. 2. That a *bishop* ought to be one who is apt to teach; and consequently he must have taught for some time as an *elder*, or filled some office in the church, whereby his aptness to teach might appear. On the phrase “the condemnation of the devil,” we would observe that Satan might graft many dangerous temptations not only on the man’s pride, but on the evil report which he might have incurred by any scandal before he entered on the ministry; either attempting to draw him to the commission of former evils, from an apprehension that he had very little reputation to lose by a new fall; or weakening his hands in efforts of usefulness, by a fear, that the remembrance of those past irregularities would render his attempts less effectual:—thoughts worthy the consideration of all who design themselves for the ministry; and especially to be recollected, when persons who have been remarkably profligate, are desirous of undertaking it, or returning to it.

Ver. 7. *Lest he fall into reproach, &c.*] Lest, the unbelieving Jews or Gentiles being able to blast his reputation, he fall into the reproach and snare of the accuser, for the bad life he led before his conversion. “For the

“Christian church will flourish or decay very much, according to the character or behaviour of its bishops or pastors.” See 1 Thess. iv. 12.

Ver. 9. *Holding the mystery of the faith, &c.*] The deacons were to be such as held the mystery of the pure and unmixed Christian faith, and that held it in a good conscience, and would be ready openly to profess it: men of integrity, and of charity towards both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and who were not for imposing upon the one or the other. See Gal. ii. 2. Ephes. i. 9. and iii. 1—11.

Ver. 10. *Let them use the office, Let them exercise, &c.*]

Ver. 11. *Even so must their wives be grave,*] There was as much reason that this should extend to the wives of *bishops* also; and as he begins the next verse with *let the deacons*, that is to say, as well as the bishops, be the husbands of one wife,—perhaps he might so design it. These wives were not to slander any body, and especially not to blast the characters of the poor to their husbands, and so cut them off from the charitable relief of the church. The deacons themselves are required, ver. 8. not to be fordidly covetous; and here their wives are ordered to be faithful in all things. These orders might be given, partly, to prevent their being tempted, or falling into the temptation of embezzling the public money. See Acts, vi. 1. &c.

Ver. 13. *Purchase to themselves a good degree,*] Acquire for themselves an honourable degree, [that of presbyter or bishop,] and great assurance in preaching the Christian faith. See Heylin. The apostle alludes here to the practice of electing the deacons from the best among the laity; the priests or elders from the best among the deacons; and the rulers or bishops from the best among the priests or elders.—Where the unbelieving Jews were so virulent, and the Gentiles so much exasperated by Demetrius and his company, there was a necessity for great boldness and fortitude; especially in the officers of the Christian church, who are generally the first exposed to persecution.

Ver. 15. *The house of God, which is the church, &c.*] Dr. Benson

' the house of God, which is the church ' of the living God, the ' pillar and * ground of ' the truth.

16 And without controversy great is the

mystery of godliness : God was * manifest in the flesh, ' justified in the Spirit, ' seen of angels, ' preached unto the Gentiles, ' believed on in the world, ' received up into glory.

¹ 2 Tim. 2. 20. Heb. 3. 2, 3, 5, 6. Mat. 16, 18. ² Jer. 10. 10. ³ 1 Thess. 1. 9. ⁴ 1f. 59. 19. & 2. 2, 3. & 43. 10, 21. Jude, 3. ⁵ Or
⁶ Ver. 16. Gal. 3. 1. Ch. 4. 6. ⁷ 2 Tim. 1. 23. John, 18. 37. ⁸ 1f. 7. 14. & 9. 6. John, 1. 14. Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 8. 3. ⁹ 2 Cor.
¹⁰ 1 Pet. 3. 18. Rom. 1. 4. John, 16. 10. ¹¹ Mat. 4. 11. & 28. 2. John, 20. 12. Pf. 68. 17. & 47. 5. Eph. 3. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 12. ¹² Eph:
¹³ 3, 5, 6, 8. Col. 1. 6, 23, 27. Rom. 10. 18. ¹⁴ Col. 1. 6, 23. Rev. 7. 9. ¹⁵ Mark, 16. 19. Pf. 110. 1. Heb. 1. 3. & 4. 14. & 8. 1.

Benson renders this, *that thou, who art the ground and pillar of the truth, mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the church of God.* Dr. Doddridge observes, that though many good critics refer this descriptive clause to Timothy, agreeably to that figure by which St. Peter is called a pillar, Gal. ii. 9. (compare Rev. iii. 12.) yet he thinks, had this been the construction, the accusative case would have been used to agree with the word *σε*, understood; and therefore he chooses to read the sentence as follows: "That so the whole system of evangelical truth may be considered as resting on this pillar and basis, (as the word *σθαιωμα* may signify;) that thou mayest know how it becomes thee to converse in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth: ver. 16. And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness, namely, what follows; that God was manifested, &c."—Bengelius and others understand the passage nearly in the same manner.

Ver. 16. *God was manifest in the flesh, &c.*] See the parallel passages: *The Word, that was God, dwelt among us; and we have seen his glory,* John, i. 1, 14. *He was manifested, and came in the flesh, who was the Son of God,* 1 John, iii. 5, 8. iv. 2. *He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was made in the likeness of men,* Phil. ii. 6, 7. *He who is over all, God blessed for ever, was also of the seed of David according to the flesh,* Rom. ix. 5.—He was justified by the Spirit, as doing those miracles on earth, by which he justified his mission against all the accusations of the Jews, by the Spirit of God, Matth. xii. 28. being declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness, Rom. i. 3, 4. by sending down that Spirit after his ascension into heaven, Acts, ii. 33. which he had promised to his disciples upon earth, and by which the world was convinced of his righteousness, John, 16. 10.—He was seen of the angels, who at his entrance into the world did worship him, Heb. i. 6. who celebrated his birth, and gave notice of it to the shepherds, Luke, ii. 9, 13. who ministered to him in the desert, Matth. iv. 11. and in his agonies, Luke, xxii. 43. xxiv. 4, who were present at his resurrection, and attended him at his ascension into heaven, Acts, i. 10.—The whole history of the gospel shews, that he was preached to the Gentiles, and believed on in the world.—And, lastly, he was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of Majesty in glory, Mark, xvi. 19. Luke, xxiv. 51. Acts, i. 2, 11.

Inferences.—What a high esteem should we have of the churches which God has erected in our world—churches, which he, as the living God, animates by his Spirit, and dwells in as in his own house! What suitable officers has he appointed to attend their spiritual and temporal con-

cerns! and what admirable directions has he given concerning them, that no person unqualified may be chosen to such important stations, and none may misbehave in them! How good and honourable, and yet laborious a work is it, to have the oversight of souls and their spiritual concerns! but how many are the excellent qualifications necessary for it! Persons called to this office, ought to be skilful in the work of righteousness, not raw upstarts, but fit to teach others, lest they be puffed up with pride, which was the sin and ruin of the devil: they should be men of blameless morals, of prudence, faithfulness, and gravity, generosity and affability, in every relation in life; keeping the families and children under their care in good order, and governing their own passions and appetites, tongues and hands, with moderation and decency, lest they fall into reproach, and Satan and his emissaries take an advantage against them. And in how many things should deacons, together with their wives, copy after them? They should hold the mystery of the faith in a good conscience, and be very exact in their morals: and the more diligent, faithful, prudent and compassionate they are in discharging the duties of their trust, the higher honour and esteem they will rise to in the church, and the more courageous will they grow in the profession of their faith in Christ. Happy souls, that are enabled to act up to all these characters and duties in their respective stations! but how careful should they be, that the church may not sink for want of having the truth of the gospel for its foundation and support! Oh the unfathomable depth, importance, and glory of the great mystery of godliness, as it shines forth in God manifested in the flesh to make atonement for sin; raised from the dead for the justification of his person and cause, and of believers in him; beheld, witnessed to, and adored by the holy angels in his ascension to heaven; preached with wide extent to the Gentile world, and believed on by multitudes of them, who received him in a glorious manner, suitable to his own exaltation, as God-man Mediator on his throne!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Timothy being left to preside over and regulate the affairs of the Ephesian church, the apostle gives him directions concerning those who should be ordained to ministerial offices among them.

This is a true saying, *If a man, inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, desire the office of a bishop, or overseer of the church of Christ, he desireth a good work:* the post is most honourable and important, yet withal most laborious, and requires singular qualifications for the right discharge thereof. *A bishop then must, (1.) Be blameless;* his morals irreproachable, and his character able to bear the nicest scrutiny.

C H A P. IV.

He foretelleth that in the latter times there shall be a departure from the faith. And to the end that Timothy might not fail in doing his duty, he furnisheth him with divers precepts belonging thereto.

[Anno Domini 58.]

NOW the Spirit ^a speaketh expressly, that in the latter times ^b some shall depart

^a 2 Theff. 2. 3. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. 2 Pet. 3. 3. John, 2. 18. Jude, 18. Dan. 7. 8. 20, 24, 25. & 11. 36—39. ^b Rev. 13. 3, 8. 1 John, 2. 18. Jude, 3, 4, 18. 2 Theff. 2. 3, 4, 7, 9—11. Rev. 9. 2, 11. & 13. 5, 6, 13, 14. & 17. 5. & 18. 2. ^c Rom. 16. 18. Eph. 4. 14. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 15, 18, 19. & 3. 2, 3, 17. Mat. 7. 15. Ch. 5. 19. 2 Tim. 3. 5. ^d Eph. 4. 19. Rom. 1. 28. ^e Heb. 13. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 39. ^f Gen. 1. 29. 30. & 9. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 30. Mat. 14. 19. Rom. 14. 6. Ver. 4.

scrutiny. (2.) If he be not single, let him be *the husband of one wife*; who has never given a divorce in order to marry again, nor lives in polygamy. (3.) He must be *vigilant* over the souls committed to his care, and habitually resident among them. (4.) *Sober*, moderate in the use of every creature comfort, and temperate in all things. (5.) *Of good behaviour*; courteous, engaging, prudent, edifying. (6.) *Given to hospitality*; ready to relieve strangers, and assist the necessitous. (7.) *Apt to teach*; furnished with Christian knowledge and experience, and possessing the faculty of communicating his sentiments with ease and propriety for the improvement of others. (8.) *Not given to wine*; not merely no drunkard, but never sitting long at the cups, or loving the glafs. (9.) *No striker*; not passionate or quarrellome. (10.) *Not greedy of filthy lucre*, and suspected of attachment to earthly gains and advantages; but (11.) *Patient*; a pattern of meekness and long-suffering. (12.) *Not a brawler*; clamorous, contentious, and talkative: *nor*, (13.) *covetous*; seeking the fleece more than to feed the flock, and serving for hire, rather than for the love of men's souls. (14.) *One that ruleth well his own house*, with due discipline and authority; *having his children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house*, and so behave there as to preserve order and decorum, *how shall he take care of the church of God*, where so much difficulty may be expected, and so much more prudence is necessary? (15.) *Not a novice*, and but lately acquainted with, and converted to, the faith of Christ; *lest being lifted up with pride*, thrusting himself arrogantly into an office for which he is not qualified, and ambitious of human honour, or popular applause, *he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, and sink the deeper from the height whereunto he affected to soar. (16.) *Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without*; his conduct unsullied with any thing which would be an obstruction to his ministry; *lest he fall into reproach*, and grow contemptible, and into the snare of the devil.

Ere any man appears a candidate for the ministry, let him solemnly consider these things. It is not ease, or honour, or gain, or a genteel employment, that should lead us into the service: these are motives dishonourable, unhallowed, impious. Zeal for God, disinterested love of souls, must warm our bosoms, and unreserved devotedness of ourselves to Christ must mark each step. And, *Who is sufficient for these things*, may we well say? The best

from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 ^c Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience ^d seared with a hot iron;

3 ^e Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from ^f meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

qualified will be most conscious how short they come, and be looking constantly up to him who hath promised, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Matth. xxviii. 20.

2dly, We have,

1. The character of the deacons, whose office it was chiefly to take care of the outward matters of the church, assist the presbyters in their ministerial duties, provide for the poor, and manage the public stock.

(1.) They must be *grave*, men of venerable deportment. (2.) *Not double-tongued*; warping the truth to please in different companies, and speaking with dissimulation. (3.) *Not given to much wine*, but persons of exemplary temperance. (4.) *Not greedy of filthy lucre*, lest they be tempted to embezzle the church's stock. (5.) *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*; cleaving steadily to the simplicity of the gospel doctrines, and adorning them by a becoming conversation. (6.) *And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless*; having undergone a proper examination, and being approved, let them be invested with their office. (7.) *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife*, avoiding all divorce and polygamy; *ruling their children and their own houses well*; setting them a good example, and maintaining due order and regularity. *For they that have used the office of a deacon well*, with fidelity and diligence, true to the trust committed unto them, *purchase to themselves a good degree of honour and respect in the church, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus*; God blessing such fidelity with an increase of grace, and greater openness and freedom in the profession of the gospel before men.

2. The character of the deacons' wives. *Even so must their wives be grave*, in manners, dress, speech, and deportment: *not slanderers*; speaking evil of persons behind their backs, and sowing discord in the church: *sober*. free from excess: *faithful in all things*, that they may be a credit to their husbands, and adorn their station.

3dly, Though he hoped to be with Timothy at Ephesus shortly, yet, lest the Lord should call him elsewhere, he had sent the above directions. *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, and arrive not so soon as I purpose, I have sent this epistle, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*; which last words some refer

4 ^a For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving :

5 ^b For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance

^a Gen. 1. 31. Rom. 14. 14, 20. 1 Cor. 10. 25. Titus, 1. 15. Acts, 10. 15. ^b Ch. 6. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Gen. 1. 29. & 9. 3. Acts, 10. 15. Mat. 4. 4. ^c Rom. 15. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 6. & 2. 15. 2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 15. & 3. 1. Jude, 5.

fer to the church, where the truth is held forth as an inscription written on a pillar, and maintained with all steadfastness : others to Timothy himself, who was a firm pillar in that church : but perhaps, best of all, they may be referred to Christ himself, the living God, abiding in his own temple, and its true foundation and support. *And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, especially in the following particulars : God was manifest in the flesh, and took our nature upon him : justified in the Spirit, when by his resurrection he was declared free from every charge, and God's justice fully satisfied : seen of angels, when, triumphant, he ascended to the throne of majesty on high amid their acclamations : preached unto the Gentiles, as a Saviour to the uttermost, and freely inviting them to partake of all the blessings of his gospel : believed on in the world, both by Jews and Gentiles, notwithstanding the ignominy of his cross : received up into glory, to possess the reward of his sufferings.* *Notes.* (1.) The all-sufficiency of the atonement of Jesus depends upon the divine glory of his person. He who suffered on the cross was very God as well as man. (2.) This is among the mysteries of godliness, where reason must bow down, and faith adore.

CHAP. IV.

BY calling the Christian church, in the end of the preceding chapter, *the pillar and support of the truth*, the apostle teaches us, that one of the important purposes for which that great spiritual building was reared, was to preserve the knowledge and practice of true religion in the world. Nevertheless, knowing that in after-times, great corruptions, both in doctrine and practice, would at length take place in the church itself, and that the general reception of these corruptions by professed Christians would be urged as a proof of their being the truths and precepts of God, on pretence that the church is *the pillar and support of the truth*, the apostle, to strip these corruptions of any credit which they might derive from their being received by the multitude, and maintained by persons of the greatest note in the church, judged it necessary, in this fourth chapter, to foretel the introduction of these corruptions, under the idea of *an apostasy from the faith*, and to stigmatize the authors thereof, as lying hypocrites, whose consciences were seared. And to give his prediction the greater authority, he informed Timothy, that the Spirit spake it to him with an audible voice, or in the most clear and intelligible manner ; and mentioned in particular, that these lying teachers would corrupt the gospel by enjoining the worship of angels and of departed saints, ver. 1, 2.—and by forbidding certain classes of men to marry, on pretence that thereby they made themselves more holy ; and by commanding *some* at all times, and *all* at some times, to abstain from meats which God hath created to be used with thanksgiving, by them who know and believe the truth ; ver. 3.—because every kind of meat is good, and

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nothing is to be cast away as unclean, which God hath made for food, provided it be received with thanksgiving, ver. 4.—For it is *sanctified*, that is, made fit for every man's use, by *the word* and permission of God, and by *prayer*, ver. 5. These things the apostle ordered Timothy to lay before the brethren in Ephesus, because the foreknowledge of them was given to him, and by him discovered to Timothy, for this very purpose, that he might warn the faithful to oppose every appearance and beginning of error, ver. 6.—And because the Jewish fables, termed by the apostle *old wives' fables*, and the superstitious practices built thereon, had a natural tendency to produce the errors and corruptions which he foretold were to arise in the church, he ordered Timothy to reject them with abhorrence, ver. 7.—especially as rites pertaining to the body are of no avail in the sight of God, and of very little use in promoting either piety or love ; whereas a pious and holy life is infinitely profitable, ver. 8.—Withal, that these things might make the deeper impression on Timothy's mind, the apostle solemnly protested to him, that in affirming them, he spake most important truths, ver. 9.—As indeed he had shewed by the heavy reproaches and other evils which he had suffered for preaching that he trusted, for salvation, neither to the rites of the law of Moses, nor to the mortifications prescribed by the Pythagorean philosophy, nor to the favour of any idol, but to the favour of the living God alone, who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of believers, ver. 10.—The same doctrine he ordered Timothy to inculcate on the Ephesian brethren, ver. 11.—and to behave in such a manner that it should not be in the power of any person, whether he were a teacher, or one of the people, to despise him on account of his youth, ver. 12.—Then, because the Jews and Judaizing teachers, founded their errors on misinterpretations of the Jewish scriptures, he ordered Timothy particularly to read these inspired writings, as well as all the others, frequently to the people in their public assemblies, and likewise in private for his own instruction ; and, on the true meaning of these scriptures, to sound all his doctrines and exhortations, ver. 13.—In the mean time, that he might attain the true knowledge of these oracles of God, he ordered him to exercise the spiritual gift which he possessed ; probably the inspiration called *the word of knowledge*, which had been imparted to him by the imposition of the apostle's hands, when, in conjunction with the eldership of Lystra, he ordained him an evangelist, ver. 14.—Farther, he desired Timothy to meditate much on all the sacred scriptures, and to be wholly employed in studying them, and in explaining them to the people, ver. 15. Finally, he commanded him to take heed to his own behaviour, and to his doctrine, from this most powerful of all considerations, that, by so doing, he would both save himself, and those who heard him, ver. 16.

Ver. 1, 2. *Now the Spirit, &c.*] This passage, perhaps,

4 E

haps,

of these things, ^k thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

^k 2 Tim. 2. 15. & 3. 10, 14—17. & 1. 13. Col. 3. 16. Jer. 15. 16. Ps. 119. 11, 18, 97—100. & 1. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 5.

haps, would be better translated, *But the Spirit speaketh expressly*. He had before been speaking of the *mystery of godliness*, ch. iii. 16. and now he proceeds to speak of the *mystery of iniquity* in opposition to it: *But the Spirit, &c.* I. The first thing to be considered is, the apostacy here predicted, "Some shall depart, or rather *apostatize*, from the faith." An *apostacy from the faith*, may be total or partial; either when we renounce the whole, or when we deny some principal and essential article of it. It is not every error, which makes an apostacy from the faith: it is a revolt in a principal and essential article,—as, for instance, when we worship God by any image or representation, or when we worship other beings besides God, and pray unto other mediators besides *the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*. This is the very essence of Christian worship, to worship the one true God, through the one true Christ; and to worship any other god, or any other mediator, is apostacy, and rebellion against God. Such is the nature of the *apostacy from the faith* here alluded to by the apostle;—and it is implied, that this apostacy should be general, and affect great numbers. For though it be said only *some shall apostatize*; yet, by *some*, in this place, *many* are understood. The original word frequently signifies a *multitude*; and there are abundant instances in scripture where it is used in that sense, as the reader will perceive from John, vi. 64. 66. Rom. xi. 17. 1 Cor. x. 5. This apostacy may be general and extensive, and include *many*, but not *all*. II. It is more particularly shewn wherein the apostacy should consist, in the following words: *Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; or rather, doctrines concerning demons*; where the genitive case is not to be taken actively, as if demons were the authors of these doctrines; (though these seducing spirits had a principal concern in introducing them;) but passively, as if demons were the subjects of these doctrines. In Jer. x. 8. Acts, xiii. 12. Heb. vi. 2. the genitive case is used in this manner; and by the same construction *doctrines of demons*, are doctrines about or concerning demons. This is therefore a prophecy, that the idolatrous theology of demons professed by the Gentiles, would be revived among Christians. *Demons*, according to the theology of the Gentiles, were middle powers between the gods and mortal men, and were regarded as mediators and agents between the gods and men. Of these demons there were accounted two kinds; one kind were the souls of men, deified or canonized after death; the other kind were such as had never been the souls of men, nor ever dwelt in mortal bodies. These latter demons may be paralleled with angels, as the former may with canonized saints; and as we Christians believe there are good and evil angels, so did the Gentiles that there were good and evil demons. The doctrines of demons then, according to this prophecy, which prevailed so long in the heathen world, were to be revived and established in the Christian church: and is not the worship of saints and angels now in all respects the same, that the

worship of demons was in former times? The name is only different, the thing is identically the same. The heathens looked upon their demons as mediators and intercessors between God and men: and are not the saints and angels regarded in the same light by many professed Christians? The promoters of this worship were sensible that it was the same, and that the one succeeded the other; and, as the worship is the same, so likewise it is performed with the same ceremonies. Nay, the very same temples, the very same altars, the very same images, which once were consecrated to Jupiter and the other demons, are now re-consecrated to the Virgin Mary and other saints. The very same titles and inscriptions are ascribed to both; the very same prodigies and miracles are related of these as of those. In short, almost the whole process which formerly belonged to Paganism, is converted and applied to Popery; the one is manifestly formed upon the same plan and principles as the other. III. Such an *apostacy* as this, of reviving the *doctrines of demons*, and worshipping the dead, was not likely to take place immediately; it would prevail and prosper *in the latter days*. The phrase of the *latter times* or *days*, or *the last times* or *days*, signifies any time yet to come; but denotes more particularly the times of Christianity. The times of Christianity may properly be called the *latter times* or *days*, or *the last times* or *days*, because it is the last of all God's revelations to mankind: see Heb. i. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 20. IV. Another remarkable peculiarity of this prophecy is, the solemn and emphatic manner in which it is delivered;—*The Spirit speaketh expressly*. By the *Spirit* is meant the Holy Spirit of God which inspired the prophets and apostles. The *Spirit's speaking expressly*, may signify his speaking precisely and certainly, not obscurely and involvively; or it may be said, that *the Spirit speaketh expressly* what he speaketh in express words in some place or other of divine writ: and the Spirit hath spoken the same thing in express words before, in the prophecy of Daniel. Daniel has foretold in express words the worship of new demons or demi-gods, Dan. xi. 38. The *Mobuzzim* of Daniel in this sense are the same as the *demons* of St. Paul; gods protectors, or saints protectors, defenders, and guardians of mankind. This therefore is a prophecy, not only delivered by immediate inspiration, but confirmed by the written word of the Old Testament. It is a prophecy, not only of St. Paul's, but of Daniel's too. V. The apostle proceeds, ver. 2. to describe by what means and by what persons this apostacy should be propagated and established in the world: *Speaking lies in hypocrisy, &c.* or rather, "Through the hypocrisy of liars, having their conscience, &c." It is plain then, that the great apostacy of the latter times was to prevail *through the hypocrisy of liars, &c.* And has not the great idolatry of Christians, and the worship of the dead particularly, been diffused and advanced in the world by such instruments and agents; by fabulous books forged under the names of the apostles and saints; by fabulous legends of their lives, by fabulous miracles ascribed

7 ¹ But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth ^m * little : but godliness is profitable unto all things,

ⁿ having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 ^o This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.

¹ Ch. 1. 4. & 6. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 16, 23. & 4. 4. Titus, 1. 14. & 3. 9. 1 Cor. 9. 24. Ads. 24. 16. Titus, 2. 11—13. & 3. 8, 14. ^m Mat. 15. 8. Heb. 13. 9. Col. 2. 23. 1f. 1. 11—15. Jer. 6. 20 Amos, 5. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 8. 8. Mat. 6. 6, 7. & 7. 22, 23. ⁿ Or for a life now. ^o Deut. 28. 3—12. & 30. 9. Pf. 1. 3. & 37. 4, 29. & 84. 11. & 91. 10. & 97. 11. & 112. 2, 7. & 119. 16. & 123. 1. & 115. 19. 11ov. 3. 16. & 8. 35. & 9. 11. Eccl. 8. 12. 1f. 3. 10. & 12. 17. Mat. 6. 16, 23. & 19. 29. Rom. 8. 23. & 14. 17. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Ch. 6. 6. Rev. 3. 12, 21. ^o Ch. 1. 15. & 3. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Prov. 22. 20.

cribed to their reliques, by fabulous dreams and revelations, and even fabulous saints, who never existed but in imagination?

Ver. 3. *Forbidding to marry, &c.*] VI. This is a farther character of the promoters of this apostacy: the same hypocritical liars, who would promote the worship of demons, would also prohibit lawful marriage. The monks were the first who brought a single life into repute: they were the first also who revived and promoted the worship of demons. One of the primary and most essential laws and constitutions of all monks is, the profession of a single life; and it is equally clear that the monks had the principal share in promoting the worship of the dead. The monks then were the principal promoters of the worship of the dead in former times; and who are the great patrons and advocates of the same worship now? Are not their legitimate successors and descendants, the monks, and priests, and bishops, of the church of Rome? And do not they also profess and recommend a single life, as well as the worship of saints and angels? Thus have the worship of demons, and the prohibition of marriage, constantly gone hand in hand together; and as they who maintain the one, maintain the other, so it is no less remarkable, that they who disclaim the one, disclaim the other. VII. The last mark and character of these men is, *commanding to abstain from meats, &c.* The same lying hypocrites, who would promote the worship of demons; would not only prohibit lawful marriage, but likewise impose unnecessary abstinence from meats. And these two, as indeed it is fit they should, usually go together as constituent parts of the same hypocrisy. It is as much the law of all monks to abstain from meats, as from marriage. Some never eat any flesh; others only certain kinds on certain days. Frequent fasts are the rule and boast of their orders. So lived the monks of the ancient church; so live, with less strictness, perhaps, but with greater ostentation, the monks and friars of the church of Rome; and these have been the principal propagators and defenders of the worship of the dead, both in former and in latter times. The worship of the dead, is indeed so monstrously absurd, as well as impious, that there was hardly any probability of its ever prevailing in the world, but by hypocrisy and lies: but that these particular sorts of hypocrisy,—celibacy, under pretence of chastity,—and abstinence, under pretence of devotion,—should be employed for this purpose, the Spirit of God alone could foresee and foretell. There is no necessary connection between the worship of the dead, and *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*; and yet it is certain, that the great advocates of this worship have, by their pretended purity and mortification, procured the greater re-

verence to their persons, and the readier reception to their doctrines; but this idle, popish, monkish abstinence, is as unworthy of a *Christian*, as it is unnatural to a *man*; it is perverting the purpose of nature, and *commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by believers, and them who know the truth.* The apostle, therefore, approves and sanctifies the religious custom of blessing God at our meals; as our Saviour, when he was to distribute the loaves and the fishes, *looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake it*: and what can be said of those, who have their tables spread with the most plentiful gifts of God, and yet constantly sit down, and rise up again, without suffering so much as one thought of the Giver to intrude upon them? It is but a thought, it is but a glimpse of devotion; and can *they*, who refuse even that, be thought to believe or know the truth? Man is free to partake of all the good creatures of God; but *thanksgiving* is the necessary condition. See ver. 4, 5. The apostle proceeds to say, that it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to press and inculcate *these things*, ver. 6. But all that is preached up of such abstinence and mortification as above specified, with all the legends of he saints, were no better *than profane and old wives' fables*,—like R^o-binical dreams, and traditions. *Godliness* is the only thing which will truly avail us here and hereafter, ver. 7, 8.

Ver. 8. *For bodily exercise profiteth little.*] The apostle, ver. 7. had said, *Exercise thyself*, as applied to a Christian life; and therefore he here uses the word *exercise*, as applied to bodily labour; and by calling it *bodily exercise*, he leads our thoughts either to the labours of the *lives*, according to the rules and institutions of their sect, or to the *agony games*, of which Mr. West has given so entertaining and useful an account in the Dissertation prefixed to his Pindar. Possibly the exercise preparatory to these games might here be more particularly alluded to. By the practice of *godliness*, Timothy was to prepare himself for the life to come; just as the combatants, by repeated bodily exercise, prepared for obtaining the victory in those games. *Godliness*, under the New Testament dispensation, has no particular promise of health, or reputation, or wealth, or any other individual worldly blessing, though in its natural consequences it bears a most friendly aspect upon all; but it has the promise of comfort and happiness in general:—and that declaration of Christ, that the good man shall receive an hundred fold, even in the midst of persecution, if such should be his lot, Mark, x. 30. might alone be sufficient to vindicate the apostle in his assertion. The law, however, certainly contains promises of temporal blessings to godliness; so that the assertion of the apostle is strictly true, when referred both to the Old and New Testament.

10^p For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we⁹ trust in the living God, who is the^r Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

11^r These things command and teach.

12^u Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an^x example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13^y Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14^z Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15^a Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; ^b that thy profiting may appear^{*} to all.

^p 1 Cor. 4. 9—13. & 9. 26. 2 Cor. 4. 8—10. & 6. 1—10. 2 Tim. 3. 10, 11. ^q Gal. 2. 16. Acts, 15. 11. Prov. 3. 5, 6. Pf. 37. 5—7. ^r Pf. 36. 6. & 107. 13—20. Acts, 14. 17. & 17. 25, 28. ^s 1c. 45. 17, 22. 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^t Ch. 6. 14. 2 Tim 4. 2. Titus, 2. 15. & 3. 8. ^u 1 Cor. 16. 10, 11. Titus, 2. 15. ^x Titus, 2. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 2. 1 Cor. 11. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 4—7. 1 Thess. 1. 6 & 2. 10. 2 Thess. 3. 7, 9. 1 Ch. 3. 14. Ver. 6, 15, 16. John. 5. 39. 2 Tim. 2. 15. & 3. 15—17. & 4. 2. ^y 2 Tim. 1. 6. Ch. 1. 13. & 5. 22. Acts, 6. 6. & 14. 23. & 13. 3. & 8. 17. & 19. 6. ^z Ver. 13. Pf. 1. 2. & 105. 5. & 119. 97—99. Acts, 6. 4. ^a Mat. 5. 16. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Ver. 11, 12. ^{*} Or in all things.

Ver. 9. This is a faithful saying,] St. Paul has used this expression four times; 1 Tim. i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 11. Titus, iii. 8. and here. They were all matters of certain truth and great importance; and the apostle used the expression to call up men's attention to them, as things of great consequence. Concerning the most important of them, he has added as here, that they are worthy of universal acceptance. The interesting truth particularly to which he here calls upon all men to attend, is, *That Godliness is profitable, &c.* The three grand principles of religion are, 1. a God, a Providence,—2. a Christ, a Mediator,—and, 3. a Future State. Without these, religion could not subsist; and the apostle, in the next verse, plainly intimates, that these principles were his support under afflictions, animating him to zeal and diligence in active service.

Ver. 10. Who is the Saviour of all men, &c.] As he is the Preserver of all men (see Job, vii. 20.), and as he offers salvation to all men: but he is especially the *Saviour* of the faithful, as he extends to them the noblest and most important deliverance; reserving for them the most invaluable blessings of a future state, and guiding them safely to it through all the dangers of this life. Those who enjoy the advantages of the Christian revelation, in the purity of it, may certainly with equal diligence excel others in knowledge, holiness, and virtue; and, consequently, may be qualified and prepared for higher felicity, or a more exalted station: and may we not hence form a notion of the Christian heaven,—namely, as a more exalted state of happiness, in proportion to the superior knowledge, piety, holiness, and virtue of a Christian?

Ver. 11. Command] Give in charge. See ch. i. 3. 5. 18.

Ver. 12. Let no man despise thy youth;] St. Paul here gives Timothy directions concerning his own conduct, especially as he was yet a young man, and had such difficulties upon his hands. He advises him to take a great deal of care how he behaved both in public and private, and particularly that he gave himself entirely to the work of the ministry, ver. 12—16. St. Paul wrote in a popular style; and, therefore, uses many words to the same purpose, to express the thing more vehemently. However, if any desire to distinguish, they may refer in word to his speech, and in conversation to his behaviour. See 1 Pet. i. 15. In charity, may possibly refer more especially

to that *love* which they owed the Gentile Christians. In *Spirit*, means in the temper or disposition of mind;—"in a candid, yet zealous spirit."

Ver. 13. To reading, to exhortation, &c.] It was the custom in the synagogue to read a portion of the scriptures of the Old Testament; and, after that, to instruct the people in the meaning of it, and to give them some useful *exhortations*. Timothy was to do so in the school of Tyrannus, and to omit nothing of a similar kind; as well as to read the Scriptures privately for his own improvement.

Ver. 14. Neglect not the gift] "Of the Holy Spirit;"—Particularly in his miraculous efficacy. Benfon would render and understand this verse, as parallel to ch. i. 18. "Neglect not the gift of the Holy Spirit which is in you; which was conferred upon you after (or according to) some prophecy or prophecies that went before concerning you." It was according to prophecy that Paul and Barnabas were set apart at Antioch, to the work unto which God had called them. See Acts, xiii. 2. xx. 28. Doddridge understands and paraphrases the verse thus: "Neglect not, by proper and strenuous exercise, to rouse and cultivate that gift of God's Holy Spirit which is in thee; which was given thee in a large and sensible effusion, on that ever-memorable day, when thou wert set apart to thy sacred office by the ministration of those who had the gift of prophecy, by which they were enabled and excited to tell something extraordinary concerning thee, &c." As this text, to say the least, strongly implies that Timothy was adorned with some supernatural gifts; so it likewise proves, that the degree in which such favours were continued, did very much depend on the diligence and fidelity with which they were cultivated by the person who had received them.

Ver. 15. Meditate upon these things;] The word *Medita* is used to denote all the preparatory exercises of mind or body made use of by those who were desirous of excelling in any art or science. St. Paul therefore recommends it to Timothy, by proper previous exercises to qualify himself for excelling in the discharge of the work of an evangelist: "Make these things your daily care and study." They who had the gifts of the Spirit in a supernatural manner, were to read and study, as well as to teach others; thus they stirred up the gift that was in them, which by negligence

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

^c Acts, 20. 28. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Titus, 2. 7, 15. 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. ^d Ezek. 33. 9. & 3. 19, 21. Dan. 12. 3. 1 Cor. 9. 22, 27. Rom. 10. 10—17. & 11. 14. Jam. 5. 20. 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20.

negligence they would have quenched. Surely then, the pastors of the church now-a-days have much more reason to read and to study.

Ver. 10. Take heed unto thyself.] As Timothy's taking heed to himself through divine grace, and to his teaching of others, and persevering therein, was necessary to his own salvation; so it was necessary in those who were instructed by him, that they, through the same grace of God, should take heed to themselves, practise the duties of the Christian life, and persevere therein; otherwise it was not in Timothy's power to become the instrument of saving them. It seems an obvious remark here, that the salvation of others may, under the blessing of God, have considerable influence upon a man's own salvation; as the better those about him are, the more advantage he has for religious improvement; the fewer hindrances from duty, and temptations to sin. But certainly, the thought chiefly referred to, is, the necessity of acting faithfully in the ministry, if pastors desire to be partakers of the divine promise of salvation; in which persons who betray so important a trust can have no part.

Inferences.—It is melancholy to think of the dreadful apostacies from the faith of the gospel, which have been in all ages; but it need not seem strange to us, since they were foretold by the Spirit of prophecy: and how plainly has that Spirit pointed out the seducing hypocritical arts of falsehood and deceit, which are used, without shame or conscience, by the apostate church of Rome, together with their worshipping of deified saints, forbidding marriages, and prohibiting meats which God created, and allows under the gospel dispensation to be moderately used, with thanksgiving for them, and prayer for his blessing upon them! With what contempt should we reject the errors that are built on uncertain traditions, as we would idle stories which are told to please children! And, instead of trusting in formal bodily services that turn to no good account, how concerned should we be to live in the practice of vital religion, which has a gracious entail of blessings upon it by the promise of God! He, as a bountiful benefactor, affords temporal preservations, deliverances and mercies to mankind in general, and freely offers salvation to all; but, as a covenant God, bestows all spiritual and eternal blessings on every faithful soul. What important truths are these, and how worthy of the most cordial entertainment! With what care should ministers inculcate them on those who are under their charge, for their caution on the one hand, and encouragement on the other; humbly trusting in the ever-living God for their own support and comfort, amidst all the reproaches, difficulties, and labours which they undergo for Christ's sake! And while, together with this, they are exemplary in faith, love, and all holiness, they will hereby approve themselves as good ministers of Jesus Christ, and good proficients in the doctrine and grace of faith. But, in order hereunto, how

much diligence ought they to use in studying, reading, and improving the gifts which God has bestowed upon them, and in giving themselves entirely to these exercises, and to preaching and prayer! And what need have they to take heed first to their own state, temper, and conversation, and then to their own doctrine; with perseverance therein, as the means of God's appointment and blessing, for the final salvation of their own souls, and the souls of their hearers!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have, in this chapter, the prophecy of that dire apostacy from the faith, which was of old foretold, and which we have seen so strikingly and dreadfully verified in the corruptions of the church of Rome. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly*, in the prophetic writings, and by us who write under his immediate inspiration, *that in the latter times of the present dispensation, some shall depart from the faith; and the marks of this apostacy he describes.*

1. The departure will arise from giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, or demons, reviving the errors of Paganism in the worship of angels, dead saints, yea, their very relics, and making these a kind of mediators between God and them.

2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy*: pretending to great zeal for the church and religion, yet propagating the most damnable heresies, such as justification by the merit of works; and by false legends, and forged miracles, deceiving the souls of the ignorant: *having their conscience seared with a hot iron*, and stopping at no abominations which may contribute to advance their wicked ends; even consecrating regicide, dispensing with the most solemn oaths, and counting every species of barbarity lawful, yea, laudable, to be perpetrated on those who oppose their destructive ways: witness the blood of martyrs, which, by popish cruelty, has so plentifully dyed this land.

3. *Forbidding to marry*; speaking dishonourably of the ordinance itself, and forbidding marriage to their clergy, monks, and nuns, in direct contradiction to God's word.

4. *Commanding to abstain from meats*, under the hypocritical shew of self-denial; forbidding flesh in Lent, and enjoining fish instead of other animal food, *which God hath created to be received*, and eaten at all times, without distinction of days and seasons, if it be used with moderation and thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. *For every creature of God is good, and nothing, proper for food, to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified for our use by the word of God*, which declares that there is nothing now common or unclean; and by prayer imploring his blessing, that we may use every creature-comfort to his glory. *Note*; Our common meals should be ever sanctified with devotion, and God's blessing be implored before we presume to use his gifts.

2dly, We have,

1. The apostle's encouraging exhortation. *If thou put the*

CHAP. V.

Rules to be observed in reproving. Of widows. Of elders. A precept for Timothy's health. Some men's sins go before unto judgment; and some men's follow after.

[Anno Domini 58.]

REBUKE ^a not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

^a Lev. 19. 3, 32. Ver. 19. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. & 4. 2. Mat. 18. 15-17. Gal. 6. 1, 2. ^b Ch. 4. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 22. 2 Cor. 6. 6. 1 Theff. 5. 21. Phil. 4. 8. ^c Ex. d. 22. 22. Pf. 68. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 3. Acts, 6. 1. Ver. 4, 5, 10, 16. ^d Or grandchildren. ^e Gen. 45. 10, 11. & 47. 12. Mat. 15. 4. Eph. 6. 1, 2. Ruth, 2. 18. ^f Or kindred. ^g Ch. 3. 13. Eph. 4. 1. & 5. 9, 10. Col. 1. 10. Phil. 4. 8, 18. Heb. 13. 16. & 6. 10.

the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained: such fidelity to his trust would bring down the blessing of the Lord upon his soul, and prove his own abundant advantage. Note; Nothing is a greater means of edification to a minister's own soul, than his labours for the good of his brethren.

2. He quickens him to diligence in his Christian calling. *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, the absurd genealogies and traditions of the Judaizing teachers; and exercise thyself rather unto godliness; strain every nerve to set forth the doctrines and duties of the gospel, and in thine own temper and conduct shew thyself eminently exemplary. For bodily exercise, the most rigid observance of the externals of religion, profiteth little; but godliness, vital, experimental religion, manifested in heart and life, is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, in the sanctified and happy use of worldly comforts, and in the enjoyment of the love of God; and of that which is to come, where God hath prepared for those that love him, such good things as pass man's understanding: this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, as a truth which will be proved infallibly certain by every real Christian; for none will ever have reason to repent a life of godliness. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, undismayed and unshaken, because we trust in the living God, who is able abundantly to fulfil his promises, and is the Saviour of all men, leaving none of them without some testimonies of his goodness, or without such offers of his grace, as are sufficient to engage and direct them so to seek the Lord, that they may find him, Acts, x. 35.—but specially of those that believe; by his abundant grace and love bestowing upon them, not only multiplied mercies in this world, but, if they be faithful to death, the inconceivable and eternal blessings of glory in the world to come. Note; Though this world is not our home, nor our portion, yet, even here below, the truly godly are the most happy people.*

3. He directs him particularly how to demean himself. *These things command and teach with all authority. Let no man despise thy youth, nor give them any occasion to do so; but behave so as to engage and command reverence and respect: and be thou an example of the believers, in word, in all grave and edifying discourse, free from youthful levity; in conversation, strictly religious, and sincerely upright; in charity, fervent towards God, and the souls of*

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, ^b with all purity.

3 ^c Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or ^d nephews, let them learn first to shew ^e piety at home, and to requite their parents: ^f for that is good and acceptable be-

men; in spirit, zealous for the cause of Jesus, and abounding in all the fruits of righteousness; in faith unwavering, in profession bold, in purity of heart and conduct, without blemish or suspicion. Till I come, give attendance to reading the scriptures in private, and in the congregation; to exhortation, bringing the word of God home to the consciences of the hearers, with warm application, for the conviction of some, and the consolation and edification of others; to doctrine, clearly stating the great points of the Christian faith, and vindicating them from all opposers. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, but make the best improvement of the abilities with which God hath furnished you, and of the extraordinary gift which was given thee by prophecy, as some inspired men had foretold, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, when you were ordained to the work of the ministry. Meditate upon these things; give thyself verbally to them, with such evident devotedness of heart, such delight in the service, and such exemplariness of conduct, that thy prising may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, as a minister and a Christian, and unto thy doctrine, that it may exactly correspond with the gospel word: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Note; (1.) They who shew themselves examples to the flock, and evidently prove that they believe and practise themselves what they preach to others, though young, will necessarily command respect and reverence; while grey hairs, dishonoured by an unbecoming conduct, will be justly despised. (2.) They who are to teach others, should be much in prayer and reading the scriptures, that they may lay in a fund of useful knowledge, and be full of matter for their public ministrations. An idle minister must needs be an unprofitable preacher. (3.) They who have the charge of immortal souls should be wholly engrossed with this great concern, and give themselves up to their awful employment. (4.) It is our great encouragement to fidelity in the ministry, that not only our own souls shall be saved, but that we shall be made happily instrumental to the eternal salvation of others, who will be our joy and crown in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. V.

BECAUSE it is the duty of ministers to reprove such of their people as err, and because the success of reproof, in a great measure, depends on the manner in which it is given, the apostle, in this chapter, directed Timothy how to admonish the old and the young of both sexes, ver. 1, 2.

—Next,

fore God.

5 ^f Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 ^g But she that liveth * in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

^f Luke, 2. 36, 37. & 18. 1. 1 Cor. 7. 32. Eph. 6. 18. Acts, 26. 7. ^g Luke, 16. 19. Mat. 8. 22. Rev. 3. 2. Jam. 5. 5. * Or *delicately*.
^h Ch. 1. 3. & 4. 11. & 6. 17. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Tit. 2. 15. & 1. 15. Ch. 4. 16. Jam. 1. 27. ⁱ If. 58. 7. Gal. 6. 10. 2 Cor. 12. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Tit. 1. 16. Luke, 12. 47, 48. John, 15. 22. † Or *kindred*.

7 ^h And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 ⁱ But, if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own † house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

—Next, he ordered him to appoint a proper maintenance for those *widows*, who being poor, and having no relations able to maintain them, were employed by the church in the honourable office of teaching the younger women the holy principles of religion, and in forming their manners, ver. 3.—And to prevent the church from being burdened with too great a number of poor widows, the apostle ordered all to maintain their own poor relations who were able to do it; because so God hath commanded, ver. 4. And, that Timothy might have a clear rule to walk by in this business, the apostle described the circumstances, character, age, qualifications, experience and virtues of those widows, who might fitly be maintained by the church, and employed in teaching the younger women, ver. 5—10. as also the character and age of those who were to be rejected, if they offered themselves to be employed and maintained in that manner, ver. 11—15. And that the church might be under no necessity of employing any widows as teachers, but such as were really desolate, the apostle, a second time, ordered the rich to take care of their own aged female relations who were poor, ver. 16.

With respect to those elders, who were employed as presidents in the church, and in determining controversies about worldly matters between man and man, the apostle ordered Timothy to allot to them a liberal maintenance out of the church's funds; especially if they were diligent and laborious in preaching and teaching, ver. 17, 18.—And for guarding the character of those who bore sacred offices, against malicious attacks, he forbade Timothy to receive any accusation against an elder, unless it was of such a nature, that it could be proved, and was actually offered to be proved, by two or three credible witnesses, ver. 19.—But being so proved, he required him to rebuke the guilty person publicly, that others might fear, ver. 20.—without shewing in the affair, either prejudice against, or partiality for any person, ver. 21.—On the other hand, that those who held sacred offices might give as little occasion as possible for accusations, the apostle ordered Timothy to ordain no person a bishop or a deacon rashly: but previous to that step, to inquire into the character, experience, conduct, and zeal of the candidate, with the greatest strictness. And to excite him to the more care in this important part of his duty, he told him, that by ordaining unfit persons to sacred functions, he would make himself a partaker of all the sins which they might commit in executing such holy offices, inconsiderately bestowed upon them, ver. 22.—Next, he directed him to take care of his health, which, considering the office he was appointed to, was of great consequence to the church,

ver. 23.—then gave him a rule, by which he was to guide himself, in judging of the characters and qualifications of the persons whom he proposed to ordain as bishops and deacons, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 3. *Honour widows*] To *honour* here, signifies not only to *respect* but *maintain*, as is evident from the context from ver. 17. and other passages of Scripture: "Respect" and *maintain* the *widows*, who are (what that word *im-* "ports) really *χρησται*, that is, *bereaved* and *desolate*."

Ver. 4. *Nephews*,] Or, *grand-children*.

Ver. 5. *Night and day*.] That is, *continually*; morning and evening, and on every proper occasion, whether by night or by day.

Ver. 6. *But she that liveth in pleasure*] The Jews had a common saying among them, "that wicked men, while they live, are to be reckoned among the dead." The Pythagoreans built empty tombs for those who had revolted from philosophy; and it was reckoned a beautiful thought in Pythagoras, and other ancient heathens, "that a *worthless man is a dead man*." That the same thought is not as much admired in St. Paul's writings, in which it is to be taken in a deeply spiritual sense, and is very frequently used, can proceed from nothing but an unreasonable partiality for what is of *heathen* extraction, and a most ungenerous contempt of what is *Jewish* or *Christian*, and, above all, from a total ignorance of all genuine religion, and the whole plan of redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. But, for spiritual remarks on this passage, see the *Inferences* and *Reflections*.

Ver. 7. *That they may be blameless*.] Some would refer this to the *widows*; but the gender of the word *ἐπιδοτριαι*, rather favours our referring it either to the deacons, or to Timothy's hearers in general; since it is certain that widows were not the only persons who, in so luxurious a city as Ephesus, were in danger of falling into such sensualities as he had been warning them against.

Ver. 8. *For his own, &c.*] That is, "for his own relations, and his own domestics;—those of his own family." *Denying the faith*, is here, according to St. Paul, leading a wicked life, or living and acting contrary to the moral law, which is adopted in the Christian law. Suppose the man of whom the apostle is here speaking, to have been perfectly evangelical in his sentiments; yet, as long as he provided not for his own family, St. Paul declares that such a one had thereby *denied the faith*; and was so much worse than one guilty of error in speculation, as to be *worse even than an infidel* himself; for the heathens were sensible of the reasonableness and necessity of taking care of their near relations. Others have interpreted the passage

9 Let not a widow be * taken into the number under threescore years old, ^k having been the wife of one man,

10 ^l Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to ^m wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 ⁿ Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal ^o they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not

only idle, but tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women ^p marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary [†] to speak reproachfully.

15 For some ^q are already turned aside after Satan.

16 ^r If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are ^s widows indeed.

17 ^t Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of ^u double honour, especially they who ^v labour in the word and doctrine.

* Or chosen. ^k Ch. 3. 2, 12. Tit. 1. 6. Luke, 2. 36. ^l Acts, 9. 39. Ch. 3. 4, 7, 12. ^m 1 Pet. 4. 9. Heb. 13. 2. Gen. 18. 4. & 19. 2. Luke, 7. 38, 44. John, 13. 5. 14. Acts, 16. 15, 16. Rom. 12. 15. Phil. 4. 8. Luke, 1. 6. ⁿ Deut. 32. 15. Hol. 13. 6. ^o Heb. 6. 4, 6. & 10. 26-31, 33. Rev. 2. 4. ^p Tit. 2. 3, 5. Lev. 19. 16. Prov. 11. 13. & 20. 19. & 18. 8. & 26. 20, 22. Ezek. 22. 9. 2 Thess. 3. 10, 11, 14. ^q 1 Cor. 7. 9. Ver. 8. Eph. 6. 4. Tit. 2. 3. ^r Gr. for their railing. ^s Phil. 2. 21. & 3. 17, 18. 2 Tim. 1. 15. & 3. 18. & 4. 10. Gal. 3. 1. ^t Ver. 4. Gen. 45. 10, 11. & 47. 12. Mat. 15. 4. Eph. 6. 1, 2. Ruth, 2. 18. ^u See ver. 3, 5, 9, 10. ^v Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 14. Gal. 6. 6. Phil. 2. 29. 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. Prov. 3. 9. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Cor. 12. 28. ^w Acts, 28. 10. 2 Kings, 2. 9. 11. 40. 2. Jer. 16. 18. & 17. 18. Zech. 9. 12. ^x Rom. 12. 6-8. Eph. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 14-17. Acts, 6. 2, 4. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Ch. 4. 11.

passage thus: "Every such Christian is in effect an apostate, (as denying the faith seems to import,) and that is worse than being an infidel, because the former sins against greater light and obligations."

Ver. 9. *Be taken into the number,] Be put upon the list,* is the precise signification of the word *καταλεγίσθω*. Surely none can imagine that the apostle meant to confine the charity of the church to widows of such an age, and who had all these characters. We must therefore conclude, that he speaks of those who bore the office of *deaconesses*, who were probably entrusted with the care of entertaining Christian strangers, whether ministers or others; and perhaps of entertaining some poor children, who might be maintained by the alms of the church: and it might be very proper on many accounts, and for very obvious reasons, that this office should be committed only to persons of an advanced age, and such as had laid aside all thoughts of marrying again. It is evident, that they who had practised hospitality themselves in their most prosperous days, would be particularly fit for one part of this office, and peculiarly worthy of the countenance which this office gave, and of the trust which it implied. We find that these widows were to be such as had been the wife of one man. It is very certain that second marriages in the general are not condemned by Christianity. The apostle expressly advises the younger widows to marry again, ver. 14.

Ver. 10. *If she have washed the saints' feet,]* It was an usual piece of civility, as well as a great refreshment in the Eastern countries, to wash a person's feet, or to take care that it should be done for him. See Gen. xviii. 4. xix. 2. Luke, vii. 38. 44. John, xiii. 5. 14, 15.

Ver. 11. *When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ,]* The word *καστριώσασι*, is a strong expression, which cannot be exactly rendered into English. When

these widows grew negligent of their proper duty, sensual affections might prevail upon them; and their credit among *Christians* being hurt by such an unbecoming conduct, it is very probable that they would even take up with *heathen husbands*, and so be led to apostatize from Christianity.

Ver. 12. *Having damnation, &c.]* *Condemnation*, which, without repentance, must end in eternal damnation, because they violate, and thereby destroy that living faith, which always produces purity of heart.

Ver. 13. *And withal—to be idle, &c.]* *And moreover, being idle, they get a habit of rambling from house to house; and are not only idle, but triflers, Φλυαροί*:—a word derived from the verb *φλυαίω*, which signifies the noise made by water, when it is ready to boil over; and therefore well expresses the inward fermentation (if we may so speak) in the minds of these trifling people, which they vented by unprofitable discourses.

Ver. 17. *Let the elders, &c.]* The apostle proceeds to give directions concerning *elders*, and that under three heads: *First*, with respect to the provision which the church was to make for them, especially for the diligent among them. *Secondly*, with respect to Timothy's improving them, which was not to be done but upon good evidence; and, if well attested, it was to be done publicly, for a warning to others. This being an ungrateful work, he charges it upon Timothy in the most solemn manner. And then, *thirdly*, with respect to Timothy's ordaining of elders, he advises that it be done upon mature and deliberate consideration; and particularly upon a full inquiry into their characters. In the midst of these faithful and wise admonitions, he drops some brief directions concerning Timothy's health, as considering his life of great importance to the Christian church, ver. 17—25. The *elders* here specified, were perhaps the *first-fruits*

18 For the scripture saith, ^y Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but ^{*} before ^z two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin ^a rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 ^b I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things ^c † without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 ^d Lay hands ^e suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

23 ^f Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

24 ^g Some men's sins are open before-hand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.

25 ^h Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

^y Deut. 25. 4. ^z Cor. 9. 9. Mat. 10. 10. Lev. 19. 13. Deut. 24. 14, 15. Luke, 10. 7. ^{*} Or under. ^a Mat. 18. 16. John. 8. 17. ^b Cor. 13. 1. Heb. 10. 28. Deut. 17. 6. & 19. 15, 18. ^c Gal. 2. 11, 14. Deut. 13. 11. Tit. 1. 13. & 2. 15. ^d 2 Tim. 4. 2. ^e Ch. 6. 13. ^f 1 Thess. 5. 27. ^g 2 Tim. 2. 14. & 4. 1. Gal. 1. 20. Phil. 1. 3. ^h Lev. 19. 15. Deut. 17. 4. & 19. 18. Prov. 18. 5. ⁱ 2 Thess. 2. 5. ^j Gal. 6. 6. & 13. 3. Ch. 4. 14. ^k 2 Tim. 1. 6. & 2. 2. ^l Ch. 3. 10. Job. 6. 12. Eub. 5. 11. Ch. 4. 12. ^m 2 John. 11. ⁿ Pl. 104. 15. Eph. 5. 29. ^o Acts, 8. 18. & 1. 16, 17. Gal. 5. 19, 20. ^p Gal. 5. 22, 23. Phil. 4. 8. ^q 1 Pet. 3. 8—16.

fruits or first converts in the Christian church at Ephesus.

Ver. 18. *The labourer is worthy of his reward.*] This passage occurs no where in the New Testament, except here and Luke, x. 7. St. Luke was the companion of St. Paul, and wrote his gospel, not only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but, as it were, under the inspection of that apostle; insomuch that some of the ancients have applied that Gospel to St. Paul, and called it *his gospel*.

Ver. 20. *Them that sin, rebuke*] This was also according to the custom of the synagogue.

Ver. 21. *And the elect angels,*] That is, "Those angels, who having kept their stations, when so many of their fellows were seduced by Satan, are now confirmed in a state of immutable felicity, and shall attend our common Lord to the awful judgment of the great day."

Ver. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man,*] "Suddenly and rashly, before his character and qualifications have been fully examined, and thoroughly approved."

Ver. 23. *Drink no longer water*] One cannot forbear reflecting here, how very temperate Timothy must have been, to need an advice of this kind, which amounts to no more than mingling a little wine with his water: and what is said of his many infirmities, compared with the apostle's exhortation to him to be instant in preaching the word, may certainly teach us, that every weakness of constitution is not to be acquiesced in, as an excuse for not going on with the ministry; though, doubtless, great allowances are to be made for bodily infirmities; and life itself may often depend upon seasonable interruptions of public labour. The 24th and 25th verses contain reasons for being cautious in ordination, mentioned ver. 22.

Ver. 24. *Some—are open before-hand, &c.*] *Are notorious, going before to judgment; and some men follow after.*

Inferences.—With what respect should the aged, whether men or women, and with what affability and purity should younger people, be cautioned against every sinful practice and avoidable infirmity! The descendants of poor widows ought to treat them with attention, and provide as

honourably for them as they can. How unnatural, and how contrary to all the principles of Christianity, and worse than heathenish is it, for gospel professors to neglect their destitute parents and their own families! But if the offspring or pious relations of poor widows are not able to maintain them, the church to which they belong ought to take them under its care. And if any church want good matrons to attend their sick and poor, they may appoint such widows of advanced years to that service, as have obtained a good report, and shewn a humble compassionate regard to the saints and servants of Christ: but young widows ought not to be put into that office, lest, giving themselves up to pleasure, they become idle, tattling, busy-bodies who are the pests of society; and at length renounce their profession of the true faith, and, following the devices of Satan, throw off religious restraints to their own condemnation: they are indeed in the worst sense dead, while they live: but as to poor young widows of better character, instead of their being burdensome to the church, it may be advisable for them to marry believing husbands, who are capable of maintaining them; and to bear and bring up such children in the fear of the Lord, as he may be pleased to give them in his Providence; as also to manage their household business with economy and good housewifery.—How solemn is the charge given in this chapter, to all bishops and pastors, as well as evangelists, in the presence of God and his Christ, and the holy angels, that they faithfully declare these things, and fulfil every part of their office! and though reproofs and censures are the most difficult and grievous duties of their station, yet they are to discharge them with fidelity, and without partiality, whether it be towards church officers or towards private members. But with what care and caution should the bishops or chief pastors of churches proceed in ordinations, lest they themselves share with the ordained in their guilt! And, O! what prudence, tenderness, and courage do they need for conducting themselves, according to the appearances of some people's sins on the one hand, and good deeds on the other, which shew themselves before or after they pass judgment upon them! How

4 F arduous,

C H A P. VI.

Of the duty of servants. Not to have fellowship with new-fangled teachers. Godliness is great gain, and love of money the root of all evil. What Timothy is to flee, and what to follow; and whereof to admonish the rich. To keep the purity of true doctrine, and to avoid profane janglings.

[Anno Domini 58.]

LET^a as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy

^a Eph. 6. 5-8. Col. 3. 22-25. 1 Pet. 2. 16, 18. Tit. 2. 5-10. Neh. 5. 9. 2 Pet. 2. 19. If. 52. 5. Ezck. 36. 23. Rom. 2. 24. ^b Gal. 3. 28. Col. 3. 11. ^c Or believing. ^d Ch. 1. 3. Rom. 16. 17. Gal. 1. 6, 7. 2 Tim. 1. 13. & 4. 3. Tit. 1. 3. & 2. 1, 10-14. & 3. 7.

arduous, upon the whole, is the ministerial work! and how ought they, who are eminently laborious in preaching and supporting the pure gospel of Christ, to be honoured with great respect and a comfortable maintenance, according to the directions of both the Old and New Testaments. And though they ought to be temperate in all things, they need not confine themselves to drinking water; but may lawfully use wine, with moderation, for the stomach's sake, when their labours and bodily infirmities require it, and it becomes needful for the preservation of their health, and their service in the church.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle proceeds to give Timothy farther directions concerning the needful, though less pleasing, work of rebuke. Ministers are reprovers by office, and must be faithful to this trust.

Rebuke not an elder, in years or office, (if ought be found in him which demands censure,) with a magisterial air, or an unbecoming severity; but, out of respect to his venerable years, entreat him as a father, to remove the cause of offence: and the younger men as brethren, with all freedom, yet withal in love and meekness: the elder women, as mothers, with due respect; the younger, as sisters, with all purity; avoiding every thought, word, look, or gesture, that has the most distant tendency to evil.

2dly, The apostle particularly directs Timothy, how to behave in the case of widows who applied to be assisted out of the church's stock, and to be employed in pious offices under the direction of the deacons.

1. Honour widows that are widows indeed, really in distress, in need of assistance, and deserving to be placed on the church's list; and these he describes as follows: *Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, without any friends to support her, trusteth in God, who is the friend of the friendless; and they who cast their care upon him shall not be destitute: and such a one continueth in supplications and prayers night and day; depending upon the Lord's providential help, and shewing her undissembled piety. But she that liveth in pleasure, gayly, idly, and voluptuously, is dead whilst she liveth; dead to God and godliness, and in no wise to be received of the church, or supported from the common stock. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless, and that no just offences may call for rebuke or censure. Note; A life of carnal pleasure is a state of real death: the soul there lies entombed in flesh, and such a person is really a living sepulchre.*

of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are ^b brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are * faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

3 ^c If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of

2. If any widows have near relations capable of providing for them, the church ought not to be burdened with their maintenance. *If any widows have children or nephews, or grandchildren, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents, by taking all care of them when labouring under age and infirmities; for that is good and acceptable before God; their bounden duty, and agreeable to his holy will. But if any one who makes profession of the Christian name, refuse that assistance, which in such a case he is bound to afford, and provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, (his aged parents, next to his wife and children, claiming a title to maintenance, as parts of that family which depend on him for a provision,) he hath denied the faith, by such a conduct, and is worse than an infidel: even the very heathen will rise up to condemn a conduct so base and unnatural. Therefore if any man or woman that believeth, have widows, mothers, or grandmothers, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may have a sufficiency to relieve them that are widows indeed.*

3. He points out the age and qualifications of those who should be entered on the poor's list, or taken into office and employed by the church under the deacons. *Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man; well reported of for good works in her former better days; if she have brought up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; if she have lodged strangers, when brought by Providence in her way; if she have washed the saints' feet, condescending to the lowliest offices of charity; if she have relieved the afflicted, with her help, her counsel, and her substance; if she have diligently followed every good work.*

4. *But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, as they may be in danger of doing, they will then marry improperly, perhaps wickedly, into some heathen family; having thus damnation, because they have cast off their first faith, and apostatized from the profession which they once made: and withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house in useles and impertinent visiting; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy bodies, officious and talkative, speaking things which they ought not, to the hurt of their neighbour's reputation, and the disturbance of society.*

3dly, The apostle directs Timothy,

1. Concerning the proper maintenance of a gospel ministry. *Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double*

our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 ^d He is * proud, knowing nothing, but † doting about questions and strifes of words,

^d Prov. 25. 14. 1 Cor. 8. 1, 2. Gal. 6. 3. Ch. 1. 4. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 23. Tit. 1. 14. & 3. 9. Prov. 13. 7. 1 Cor. 11. 16. Jam. 4. 1. * Or a fool. † Or fact.

double honour, highly esteemed and liberally provided for, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine, whose eminent zeal and diligence require a suitable acknowledgment: for the scripture saith, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*; but as he works, he shall be freely allowed to eat: and our Lord hath said, *The labourer is worthy of his reward*. Note; The work of the ministry is laborious; and well do they who discharge it with zeal and diligence, deserve a comfortable provision.

some time to make it clear whether they should be received; for, if they are really corrupt in principle or practice, they will soon betray themselves. Note; (1.) Before any be admitted into sacred orders, their character and qualifications should be well examined. An ignorant and scandalous ministry is the greatest reproach to any church. (2.) However secretly men may hide their sins, yet usually in time their true character appears, and at least at a judgment-day no veil can hide the workers of iniquity.

C H A P. VI.

2. Concerning the accusation of an elder. *Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses* of character and credibility; and listen to no base surmises or slanderous suggestions. *Them that sin before all, being open, notorious, and scandalous offenders, rebuke before all, publicly and with sharpness, that others also may fear*, respecting no man's rank or greatness. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Judge; and the elect angels, who are the spirits that minister to the heirs of salvation; that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, not prejudging the cause, through favour or affection; doing nothing by partiality, nor suffering any consideration to prejudice or bias your mind for or against any man, but deciding according to truth*.

ALTHOUGH slavery, in every form and degree, is contrary to the genius and spirit of the Christian religion, yet Christianity requires that those who, in the course of Providence, are permitted by him to be in that state, should honour and obey their masters, whether they be believers or unbelievers. The apostle therefore enjoined this duty, ver. 1, 2. See also 1 Cor. vii. 20—23. Col. iii. 22. assuring Timothy, that, if any person taught otherwise, he injured the cause of God, by causing the name of God and his doctrine to be blasphemed, a doctrine which, in all points, is conformable to godliness, ver. 3.—and was puffed up with pride, sacrificing the great interests of Christianity to subordinate considerations, which were not essential to the salvation of souls, and generating strife, and every evil word and work, on points which he had nothing to do with, ver. 4.—Next, the apostle told Timothy, that the motive which influenced such characters, among the Ephesians, was of the basest kind, the love of gain, ver. 5.—but that true piety, with a contented mind, is great gain, ver. 6.—Whereas money is not real gain. It will not contribute in the least to make men happy in the life to come. For as we brought nothing with us into the world, so it is certain, that we can carry nothing out of it, ver. 7.—Therefore, instead of eagerly desiring to be rich, having food and raiment we ought to be contented, ver. 8.—Especially as experience teaches, that they who are bent on becoming rich, expose themselves to innumerable temptations, not only in the pursuit, but in the enjoyment of riches, by the many foolish and hurtful lusts which they engender, ver. 9.—Hence the apostle justly calls the love of money the root of all the evil affections and actions which are in the world, ver. 10.—Covetousness, therefore, being both highly criminal and disgraceful in all, but especially in the ministers of religion, the apostle ordered Timothy, as a servant of God, to flee from the love of money, and from all the vices which it occasions; and to pursue righteousness, piety, faith, charity, patience, and meekness, ver. 11.—and to combat strenuously the good combat of faith, by making and maintaining the good confession concerning Jesus Christ, that he is the eternal Son of God, and Son of man, ver. 12.—Then he charged him in the sight of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ, who himself witnessed under Pontius Pilate that confession, ver. 13.—to observe this commandment concerning it in an unblame-

3. Concerning the ordination of ministers. *Lay hands suddenly on no man* to put him into the ministry, till he has been thoroughly tried, and found faithful, and able; neither be partaker of other mens' sins, by conniving at the intrusion of unfit persons into the sacred office: *keep thyself pure from the blood of all men, discountenancing all unbecoming behaviour, and in thy own conversation a pattern of purity and chastity*.

4. Concerning his own health. *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*; indefatigable labour and strict abstemiousness probably preyed upon a tender constitution, and required in moderation something more supporting than water, to which he had confined himself. Note; The creatures of God are designed for our use and comfort; only let them be used with moderation; not to pamper the flesh, but so as to enable us the better to fulfil the duties of our station.

5. With regard to censure and ordination, of which he had before spoken, he farther observes, *Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment*; and, being notorious, such are to be rejected from the ministry, and laid under the church's censure; and some men they follow after, and though they studiously conceal their sins, yet, on deeper and closer examination, they will after a while come out; and therefore they should not hastily be admitted into sacred orders, without due probation. *Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand, their whole character strikingly exemplary, and their ministerial gifts eminent; so that they may be admitted without hesitation: and they that are otherwise cannot be hid*; more caution is needful with those whose qualifications are dubious, and it requires

whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmifings,

5 ^c * Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, fupposing that gain is godlinefs: from fuch withdraw thyfelf.

6 ^f But godlinefs with contentment is great gain.

7 ^g For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is certain* we can carry nothing out.

8 ^h And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

9 ⁱ But they that will be rich fall into temp-

tation and a snare, and *into* many foolifh and hurtful lufhs, which drown men in deftruction and perdition.

10 ^k For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while fome coveted after, they have * erred from the faith, and pierced themfelves through with many fowrows.

11 But thou, ^l O man of God, flee thefe things; and follow after righteoufnefs, godlinefs, faith, love, patience, meeknefs.

12 ^m Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alfo called, and haft profefed a good profefion before many witnefses.

^a 1 Cor. 17. 16. Rom. 16. 17, 18. Ch. 1. 6, 19. II. 5, 6, 11. 2 Pet. 2. 3. Titus, 1. 12, 14, 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5, 9. 2 John, 10. Titus, 3. 10. 2 Theff. 3. 6, 14. Rev. 18. 4. ^b Or *gallings one of another.* ^c Pf. 37. 16. ^d If 33. 16. Ch. 4. 8. Prov. 8. 21. & 15. 16. & 16. 8. & 17. 1. 2 Cor. 9. 8. Heb. 13. 5. ^e Job, 1. 21. ^f Pf. 49. 17. ^g Eccl. 5. 15. ^h Gen. 28. 20. ⁱ Pf. 55. 22. & 35. 28. & 30. 8. ^j Mat. 6. 25, 33. ^k Phil. 4. 11. Heb. 13. 5. ^l 1 Pet. 5. 7. ^m Prov. 11. 28. & 15. 27. & 20. 21. & 28. 20, 22. ⁿ Mat. 13. 22. James, 5. 1. Ch. 3. 7. ^o 23. 8. Deut. 16. 19. ^p 1 King, 21. 2—16. ^q Mat. 26. 15. ^r Acts, 5. 3. ^s Titus, 1. 11. with Eccl. 11. 8. ^t Pf. 109. 8—19. James, 5. 1—3. Ch. 3. 7. ^u Or *been seduced.* ^v 1 Sam. 2. 27. ^w 2 Kings, 1. 9. & 4. 16, 40. & 5. 8. ^x 2 Tim. 3. 17. & 2. 22—25. Ch. 4. 12. ^y 1 Theff. 2. 10. Phil. 4. 8. ^z 1 Cor. 9. 25, 26. 2 Cor. 10. 3—5. & 4. 7, 8. Phil. 3. 12, 14. Rev. 3. 12, 21. 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10.

ble manner; whereby he would do his part in preferving the good confeffion of the world, till it was rendered indubitable to all by the appearing of Jesus Chrift himfelf on earth, ver. 14.—whom God the Father will, at the proper time, fhew to all as his eternal Son, by the glory and power with which he will fend him to judge the world, ver. 15, 16.

But left Timothy, from the foregoing fevere condemnation of the love of money, might have inferred, that it was a crime to be rich, the apoftle, to obviate that miftake, ordered him to charge the rich, not to truft in uncertain riches for their happinefs, but in God who always liveth, and who beftoweth on men all their enjoyments; ver. 17.—and to make a proper ufe of their riches, by relieving the neceffities of the poor, and promoting every good work; ver. 18.—Because, thus they will provide for themfelves a good foundation againft the time to come, ver. 19.—Laftly, to make Timothy fenfible how earneft the apoftle was, that he fhould preferve the doctrines of the gofpel pure, he renewed his charge to him; and cautioned him to avoid the vain babbling of the Judaizers, and thofe mifinterpretations of the fcriptures by which they oppofed the doctrine of the apoftles, and which they falfeiy dignified with the name of *knowledge*, ver. 20.

Ver. 1.] Whether the law, “that the Jews fhould none of them remain flaves for life, without their own confent,” (Exod. xxi. 2—6.) might, through the devices of Satan, give occafion to introduce fomething like it into the Chriftian church, or whatever gave rife to it, it appears, that the Judaizers abfolved men from civil duties, and would have increafed their party, by drawing flaves into the Chriftian church under the notion of their being thereby rendered freed men: in oppofition to which the apoftle enjoins flaves to continue to refpect, and faithfully to ferve, *their own mafters*, whether Chriftians or not, unlefs they could obtain their freedom in a fair and legal manner. Timothy was to warn the Judaizers not to teach diffi-

rently from the apoftle in this particular; nor in any other to gratify the humours of their hearers in order to enrich themfelves, ver. 1—16. That this difcourfe was levelled againft fuch falfe teachers, appears not only from the beginning of ver. 3. but alfo from ver. 10, 11. where he exhorts Timothy from following their example.

Ver. 2. *Because they are faithful and beloved, &c.*] Dr. Heylin reads it, *but ferve them better, becaufe they are Chriftians, and to be loved, as partakers of the fame advantages.* See the Syriac verfion.

Ver. 3. *And confent not to unwholefome words,*] Or do not adhere, or give heed to wholefome words, &c.

Ver. 4. *But doting about queftions*] *But raving on queftions.* The original word feems to exprefs the effect of a difeafe upon the mind. Dr. Heylin reads it, *Knows nothing, but has the difeafe of difputation, and controversy about words.*

Ver. 5. *Fupposing that gain is godlinefs:*] *That godlinefs is gain.* Peirce. *Who confider piety as a means to enrich themfelves.* Heylin. Compare Philip. iii. 19.

Ver. 6. *But godlinefs with contentment, &c.*] *Piety, indeed, with contentment, is great riches.* Heylin. This is a moft pleafing fentiment for the religious poor.—*Contentment* will attend *piety*, as its infeparable companion; and, confequently, the pious man will be happy, whatever his circumftances may be, and even much more fo than any accumulation of worldly wealth can make him.

Ver. 10. *Have—pierced themfelves through, &c.*] “Have felt long and incurable pains, by the numerous wounds they have given to their own confciences, as it were, on every fide.” The original word *περιέτρηναν* is very emphatical, and properly fignifies, “*They have flabbed themfelves*, as it were, *from head to feet*, fo as to be all covered with wounds.” And this indeed happily expreffes the innumerable outrages done to confcience by thofe madmen, who have taken up the fatal refolution, that they will at all adventures be rich.

Ver. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith,*] *Strive generously* for

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate ° witnessed a good * confession ;

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ :

15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* ° the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ;

16 Who ° only hath immortality, ° dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; ° whom no man hath seen, nor can see :

to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, ° that they be not high-minded, ° nor trust in † uncertain riches, but in the ° living God, ° who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ;

18 ° That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, † willing to communicate ;

19 ° Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may ° lay hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy, ° keep that which is com-

* Ch. 5. 21. 2 Theff. 5. 27. 2 Tim. 4. 1. Deut. 32. 39. 1 Sam. 2. 6. Acts, 17. 25. John, 5. 21. ° Mat. 27. 11. John, 18. 36, 37. Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. If. 55. 4. ° Or *prof. fion.* ° Ch. 4. 11—16. 2 Tim. 3. 14. Titus, 2. 7, 10—15. Phil. 1. 6, 10. 1 Theff. 3. 13. & 5. 23. 1 Cor. 1. 8. 2 Theff. 2. 1. ° Ch. 1. 11, 17. Deut. 10. 17. Pf. 136. 2, 3. Lev. 17. 14. & 19. 16. Pf. 83. 18. & 10. 16. Daniel, 5. 34, 35. 1 Ch. 1. 7. Rom. 1. 23. John, 5. 26. & 6. 57. Jer. 10. 10. Deut. 32. 40. ° 1 John, 1. 5, 7. 2 Chron. 6. 1. & 5. 13, 14. Exod. 10. 35. Rev. 15. 8. Deut. 4. 12. John, 1. 18. & 6. 16. & 5. 37. 1 John, 4. 12, 20. Exod. 33. 20. ° Rom. 16. 27. Eph. 3. 21. Phil. 4. 20. Ch. 1. 17. 2 Pet. 3. 18. Jude, 25. Rev. 1. 6. & 4. 11. & 5. 12. 13. & 7. 10, 12. ° Ch. 1. 3. & 4. 11. 2 Tim. 2. 14. Pf. 119. 46. 7 Pf. 61. 10. Prov. 23. 5. Rom. 11. 20. & 12. 16. 1 hil. 3. 2, 4. ° Pf. 62. 10. & 52. 7. Job, 31. 24. Prov. 11. 28. Mat. 6. 33, 34. Mark, 4. 18. & 10. 24. Luke, 12. 15—20. Prov. 23. 5. † *Gr. the uncertainty of riches.* ° Ver. 16. Ch. 3. 15. & 4. 10. 1 Theff. 1. 9. Jer. 10. 10. Acts, 14. 17. & 17. 25. Mat. 6. 33. 1 Cor. 3. 22. ° Luke, 12. 21. James, 2. 5, 16. Eccl. 11. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 8. 3, 12. & 9. 7. Heb. 13. 16. Deut. 15. 7. Mat. 5. 42. Rom. 12. 8, 13. Titus, 3. 8. † *Or sociable.* ° Mat. 6. 20. Luke, 12. 33. & 16. 9. Ver. 18. Mat. 10. 40, 41. Gal. 6. 8, 9. ° Ver. 12. Phil. 3. 12, 14. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 1 Pet. 1. 4. ° Rev. 3. 3, 10, 11. 2 Tim. 1. 14. & 2. 2, 14, 16, 23. Ch. 1. 4. & 4. 7. Titus, 1. 9, 14. & 3. 9. Col. 2. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 20. & 3. 18—20.

for the faith ; lay hold upon Christ, lay hold upon God, lay hold upon eternal life, &c. St. Paul, Heb. xiii. 23. says, that Timothy was set at liberty ; whence we may conclude, that he had been put in prison on account of the faith, and, on that occasion, made the *profession* spoken of in this verse ;—and the rather, because the *profession* of Christ before Pilate is mentioned in the following verse. Doddridge reads, *Maintain the good combat of faith* ; and observes very justly, that these and the following words are plainly agonistical, and refer to the eagerness with which they who contended in the Grecian games, *struggled* for and laid hold of the crown ; and the degree to which the presence of many spectators, or, as the apostle elsewhere speaks, the cloud of witnesses, animated them in their contests for it.

Ver. 13. *Who quickeneth all things,*] This seems a very suitable though oblique intimation, that should Timothy, after the example of his great Lord, sacrifice his life to the glory of God and the honour of his sacred profession, God, who raised up Christ from the dead, was equally able to raise him ; and this is most fully expressed and urged, 2 Tim. ii. 8—11. The next clause refers to John, xviii. 37. Christ's confession before the Jewish high-priest, when interrogated upon oath, was rather more express ; but this before Pilate was more dangerous ; as his owning himself a King, was the sole pretension likely to expose him to the resentment of the Roman governor, who had the supreme power of life and death. It is perhaps called a *good confession* ; not only as in itself noble and generous, but as all our hopes of salvation and happiness are built upon the truth of it.

Ver. 16. *Whom no man hath seen, nor can see :*] This might be an allusion either to the eastern courts, where the people were not admitted into the royal presence, or to behold the face of their king ; or, to the inaccessible light

and glory in which God dwelt in the *holy of holies* :—or perhaps to both. See Exod. xxxiii. 20. 1 John, iv. 12. 20. But whether it alludes to any thing temporal or not, it is peculiarly expressive of the essence of God.

Ver. 17.] As the apostle had given directions concerning some of the Judaizing Christians, who attempted to enrich themselves by preaching the gospel in a dishonest manner, he here gives directions concerning such Christians as were already possessed of riches ; namely, that they should not be proud and selfish, but pious and humble towards God ; generous, and ready to do good to their fellow-creatures ; that, when they had done with all the possessions and concerns of the present life, they might have satisfaction in the review, and be blessed with greater and more durable possessions, ver. 17—19. And that he might leave Timothy with the strongest impressions of the folly and wickedness of the Judaizing Christians, he concludes as he had begun, with charging him to adhere to the true and simple Christian doctrine, and to reject all Jewish mixtures, ver. 20, 21. Some would read the beginning of the present verse, *Charge them that are rich, not to be high-minded in this world,—but to trust in the living God, &c.* thus preserving the opposition between the two parts of the sentence. See 1 Cor. iii. 18.

Ver. 18. *Rich in good works, &c.*] If the phrases in this verse have a different signification, the following exposition of Archbishop Sharpe's may perhaps be as satisfactory as any other. " Let them endeavour, in the general, to do good ;—not only now and then, in some scanty proportion, but frequently, constantly, and abundantly ; not only with their time, labour, and interest, but by distributing of their substance too : and this as freely, as if it were a common stock, to which all had a right."

Ver. 19. *Laying up in store, &c.*] Or, *Securing, &c.*

mitted to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called :

21 Which some professing^s have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee: Amen.

^s Ch. 1. 6, 19. 2 Tim. 2. 18.

Ver. 21. Which some professing, &c.] “Which some having professed to pursue, have fatally wandered from the Christian faith, some entirely forsaking it, and others corrupting it with such adulterations, that it is hardly to be known for that religion which came immediately out of the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Though it is not certain that the name of *gnostics*, or the *knowing men*, was so early used to denominate a distinct sect, yet it is highly probable that they who opposed the apostle, made extraordinary pretences to *knowledge*; and this text seems sufficient to prove it*.

Inferences.—What an honour and encouragement it is to believing servants, even of the lowest rank, that they are brethren in Christ, partakers of all spiritual blessings equally with Christians of the highest civil station! But what a reproach is it to the name of their God, and to his gospel, for them to be so conceited on this account, as to think themselves above paying the duty they owe to their earthly masters, even though they be infidels; or to be less, and not rather more, respectful and diligent in the service of religious masters, because they are brethren in the fellowship of the gospel! Those who act in this spirit, cannot long continue Christians, if they be such at present in a small degree. These things are to be taught and learned; and whoever, under false pretences to knowledge, shall suggest sentiments contrary to these, or to any other doctrine of Christ, which are all doctrines according to godliness,—are to be rejected, as persons who are proud and ignorant, perverse, and destitute of the truth, fond of vain opinions and disputations about words, which tend to strife and envy, railing and unwarrantable suspicions, and who make a trade of religion to serve their secular interests: but true godliness, with a satisfied mind as to worldly circumstances, though we have only necessary food and raiment, is the best of all gain; and therefore is to be cultivated in earnest pursuits after righteousness, goodness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. And, alas! what is this poor empty world, that we should set our hearts upon it! We brought none of its enjoyments into it; and whatsoever we have of them here, we must certainly, ere long, leave them all behind us: and they who will seek to be rich, throw themselves into many dangerous temptations, and foolish ensnaring lusts and passions, that will one time or other recoil upon them, and pierce them through with many agonizing sorrows; will make them err from the living faith of the gospel, and plunge them into deep and endless ruin: for the love of money is the root of these and numberless other sinful and destructive evils. How needful then is it to warn the rich of this world to be humble amidst all their affluence; and not to place their confidence in uncertain wealth, but in God

through Christ, who is a free and bountiful giver of all things relating to this life, and to that which is to come! And how ready should they be to prove the sincerity of the profession of their faith in the Lord, by its genuine fruits in every good and charitable work, which will be laying in a good stock of solid happiness for the world to come, that, at the end of their Christian course, they may receive the crown of life!—O how conscientious and laborious should the servants of Christ be, in discharging every part of the ministerial trust that is committed to them; in maintaining the good profession they have made in various ways before many witnesses; and in fighting the good fight of faith, till they lay hold on eternal life! And how mindful should they always be of the solemn bonds which are laid upon them, to adhere with fidelity to divine directions, as in the presence of God the Father and of Jesus Christ! HE courageously owned himself to be the true Messiah before Pontius Pilate, and, at his second coming, will be gloriously manifested to be so by the only living and life-giving God; who is the supreme almighty Governor, above all other kings and lords; who only has immortality essentially in himself, dwells in glory inaccessible to frail mortals, and is invisible in his own being: to whom be ascribed everlasting honour, dominion, and power. Amen. May all that love him, unite in prayer for his ministering servants, that his free favour, in all its manifestations and effects, may perpetually enable them to be diligent and faithful in his work! Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle lays down,

1. The duty of Christian servants. *Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, respect, and dutiful obedience; that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, and that unbelievers may never have occasion to reproach them, as if their religion had made them proud, lazy, or disobedient. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, as if Christianity destroyed the distinctions of Providence, and brought all men on a level; no, but rather do them service, with peculiar submission, delight, diligence, and honesty, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit, sharing all the blessings of the gospel salvation.* Note; (1.) The gospel was never designed to destroy the distinctions that God hath been pleased to make among men; but to direct every man how to adorn that station in which it hath pleased God to call him. (2.) The kindness and condescension of Christian masters must never teach servants to presume, but to treat them with greater respect, more affectionate regard, and unimpeached fidelity.

2. He warns Timothy to teach steadily these truths, and

* See Benson, Bergelin, Bowyer, Cassali, Calmet, Doddridge, Dodd, Drusus, Fleetwood, Guise, Grocius, Heylin, Harris, Heinsius, Hradley, Keachbull, Kuster, Lardner, Leigh, Lord Lyttelton, Lightfoot, Linborch, Locke, Michaelis, Mills, Nece, Mann, Mintert, Bishop Newton, Phileleutherus, Lipsensis, Perre, Quisnelie, Reynolds, Raphaelius, Stockius, Bishop Stillingfleet, Schenidius, Seed, Archbishop Tillotson, Vairings, Whitby, Waterland, Wedde n, Wall, Bishop Warburton, and Wolfius.

to beware of deceivers. *These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, as the Judaizing teachers, who suggest as if it were unlawful for Christian slaves to obey their unbelieving masters; and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, inculcating all dutiful discharge of our relations towards men, as well as piety towards God; he is proud, vainly puffed up with arrogant conceit of his own wisdom, though in fact knowing nothing as he ought to know; but doting about questions and strifes of words, engaged in vain and idle disputes about matters utterly insignificant, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and who by such a spirit and temper evidently shew, that they are destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, serving merely their own worldly interests, and not the cause of Christ and immortal souls: from such withdraw thyself; have no communion with them, nor suffer them to assemble among the faithful.* Note; (1.) The doctrines of the gospel are doctrines according to godliness; and whatever would corrupt vital and practical religion, cannot be the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2.) Proud disputers must needs be far from any true knowledge of that gospel whose first injunctions are peace and love. (3.) They who make godliness in profession the ladder to earthly gain, will shortly find how fearful is their loss, when death shall hurl them into the abyss of wretchedness.

2dly, From the mention of the abuses of some corrupters of godliness, the apostle,

1. Cautions Timothy against covetousness, and to possess a contented mind. *But godliness with contentment is great gain, making the mind happy in every state of life, and under every dispensation of Providence: and this is the truest and most substantial gain even here below, where all our creature-comforts are so precarious, insufficient, and perishing. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; but we must return naked to the tomb, as we came from the womb. And therefore having food and raiment, covering for our bodies, and refreshment such as nature needs, let us be therewith content, nor grasp after more, thankful for the mercies of the day, and trusting the Lord for the provision of to-morrow. But they that will be rich, and, instead of being satisfied with their present allotted portions, are determined by every method to add to their store, and have their hearts set upon wealth as their grand object; they fall into temptation and a snare, and become an easy prey to the devil, plunging themselves, in the unhallowed pursuit after riches, into many foolish and hurtful lusts, into deceit, fraud, lying, rapine, injustice, &c. which drown men in destruction and perdition, and both body and soul perish for ever. For the love of money is the root of all evil, and the source of every vile and scandalous action: which while some coveted after, (we have seen the dreadful issue,) they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows; besides all their crosses and vexations, laying up much bitterness for themselves, if they should hereafter be brought to repentance; but if not, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, be warned by the sad examples of others, and shun with abhorrence all such covetous principles and practices.* Note; (1.) There is no true contentment in this world but that which springs from real godliness. (2.) We consult our truest interests when our

souls are our first concern. (3.) It is a mortifying reflection to every worldling, how short-lived must be his enjoyments, and that he can carry nothing with him to the grave but a shroud and a coffin. (4.) Nature is satisfied with little, grace with less, but covetousness with nothing. (5.) They who will be rich, are in the high road to ruin; Satan desires no fairer mark. (6.) The love of money has destroyed more than any other vice whatever. (7.) They, who to gain the world lose their own souls, will prove shortly their folly to be as great as their sin.

2. He enjoins him as to what was his proper pursuit. *Follow after righteousness in your transactions with men; godliness, and holiness of heart and life; faith, an increasing measure of this divine grace, and approved fidelity in all your conversation; love to God and men; patience under every provocation; and meekness, bearing with and gently instructing those that oppose themselves: yet, shewing withal a becoming zeal for the truth, fight the good fight of faith against all opposing foes from earth or hell; lay hold on eternal life, earnestly pressing towards the goal for the glorious prize, whereunto thou art also called by divine grace, as a Christian and an evangelist, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses at thy ordination, and in the presence of those among whom thou hast preached and suffered for the gospel's sake.* Note; (1.) We are engaged in an arduous warfare, and must fight every step to heaven against a host of spiritual foes who oppose our progress. (2.) Eternal life, the glorious crown before us, should animate us for every conflict. (3.) The good profession we have once made, should engage us with increasing diligence to approve our fidelity before God and man.

3dly, The apostle concludes,

1. With repeating his solemn charge, and enforcing it with the most cogent arguments. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, the author of life to all his creatures, and the giver of spiritual life to all that believe; and before Christ Jesus, whose minister thou art, and who himself before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, boldly asserting his own glorious character and office; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, faithful to the solemn trust reposed in thee, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ at the great day; which in his times, or in the proper season, he shall shew, exactly accomplishing the promise of his coming, which he has given to his faithful people, according to the glorious names and characters which he bears, who is the blessed and only potentate, to whom all in heaven and earth are subject, who hath the supreme and universal dominion: and, as he is infinitely blessed in himself, he makes also his believing people happy under his government—the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who all from him derive their power and authority, and to him are accountable; who only hath immortality in and of himself, and is the author of it to his creatures, whether angels or men; dwelling in uncreated glory, in the light which no man, in his present mortal state, can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see, in the full blaze of his divine perfections and attributes: to whom be honour and power everlasting ascribed by all the hosts of earth and heaven. Amen.*

2. He gives him a particular charge, to be delivered to the more opulent members of the church. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, puffed up on account of their worldly wealth and attainments;*

ments; *nor trust in uncertain riches* as their dependance and rock, since these are transitory possessions; *but in the living God*; the only substantial and abiding good, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, loading us with his benefits, and allowing us every sanctified use of his creatures: wherefore they who are thus favoured, must see *that they do good with their wealth*, not abusing it in luxury and extravagance; *but that they be rich in good works*, employing their treasures for the benefit of mankind; *ready to distribute*, even unasked, to the indigent and necessitous; *willing to communicate*, of their substance, without grudging or niggardliness; *laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come*, disposing of their treasures in such a way as *that they may have treasure in heaven*, and *lay hold on eternal life*. *Note*; (1.) Wealth is a talent intrusted with us for the benefit of our brethren: we are stewards, and must give an account of our profiting to the great Master. (2.) Riches are a great temptation to pride; therefore such as have affluence, should be often admonished in their high estate

to keep a humble mind. (3.) They are truly rich, who are rich unto God, and improve their abundance to his glory.

3. He warns him, as before, to take heed of deceivers. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust*, the unadulterated gospel word; *avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called*, the noisy talk and proud boastings of Judaizing, or gnostic teachers, pretending high attainments in science, when in fact utter strangers to true wisdom; *which some professing, have erred concerning the faith*, and apostatized from the truth. *Note*; The science which draws men from the simplicity of the gospel, however proud men may value themselves thereon, will be proved at last to be the most egregious folly.

4. He gives him his parting benediction. *Grace be with thee*; and that shall preserve thee from all error, and strengthen thee for the faithful discharge of the ministry. *Amen!*

THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
TIMOTHY.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Second Epistle to Timothy was not written till some years after the First. St. Paul had not yet been carried prisoner to Rome, where he remained two full years, Acts, xxviii. 30. when he wrote the First; whereas, at the time he wrote this Second Epistle to his dear disciple, he was for the second time a prisoner at Rome, and on the point of suffering martyrdom for the Gospel, as he says in Chap. iv. 6, 7. He begins this Epistle with expressions of tenderness and esteem towards Timothy: he then encourages him to fulfil worthily all the duties of his office; and, as Timothy had been called to the ministry very young, and had gained great reputation, the apostle warns him to flee youthful lusts, Ch. ii. 22. because nothing is more difficult, than to keep the mind within the bounds of humility, at an age when the vivacity of the passions is raised by a consciousness of talent, and by the applauses of the public. Upon this occasion St. Paul repeats to his disciple and dear brother in Christ, the advice that he had given him in his former Epistle, to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, ver. 23. because no benefit arises in general from such disputes, being mostly upon subjects rather of curiosity than importance, and producing no solid instruction: and, since self is oftentimes more the object than truth, the consequence is, that each remains confirmed in his own opinion, and takes credit as having gained a victory over his adversary, while he himself is really conquered by his own vanity. After this, the apostle foretels a great corruption in the morals of Christians in the last days; Ch. iii. 1, &c. He adds to this, a commendation of the writings of the Old Testament, such as might render them more and more respected by the whole church, in order to teach the ministers of the Gospel frequently to draw from that holy source the doctrines of eternal life, and to raise in all the faithful an inclination to make reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures their chief study. Lastly, the apostle shews with what tranquillity a servant of the Lord, who has faithfully performed his duty, can look upon death; and how, amidst ignominy and torture, he can keep his eyes firmly fixed upon the Saviour who stands ready to receive and to crown him.

C H A P. I.

Paul's love to Timothy, and the unfeigned faith which was in Timothy himself, his mother, and grandmother: he is exhorted to stir up the gift of God which was in him, to be steadfast and patient in persecution, and to persist both in the form, truth, and power of that doctrine which he had learned of him. Phygellus, and Hermogenes, and such like are noted, and Onesiphorus is highly commended.

[Anno Domini 67.]

PAUL, ^a an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to ^b the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

² To Timothy, *my* ^c dearly beloved son; ^d Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ ^e I thank God, whom ^f I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, ^g that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

⁴ ^h Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

⁵ When I call to remembrance the ⁱ unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first

^a Rom. 1. 1. Gal. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. Acts, 9. 15. & 26. 16—18. & 13. 9. ^b 1 John, 2. 25. & 5. 10—13. 2 Cor. 1. 20. Acts, 10. 43. John, 17. 3. & 6. 40—57. Acts, 4. 12. ^c See 1 Tim. 1. 1, 2, 18. 1 Cor. 4. 15. ^d See Rom. 1. 7. 2 Cor. 13. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 2, 3. ^e 2 Thess. 1. 3. 1 Thess. 1. 2. & 5. 18. Eph. 5. 20. Col. 3. 17. See Rom. 1. 8. ^f Acts, 24. 14, 16. & 23. 1. & 22. 3. & 26. 4. & 27. 23. Rom. 1. 9. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Heb. 13. 18. Acts, 20. 18—35. 1 Thess. 2. 10. ^g See 1 Thess. 1. 2. & 3. 10. ^h Ch. 4. 9. 21. Rom. 10. 12. & 15. 30—32. Phil. 1. 8. & 2. 24. 1 Thess. 2. 17—20. ⁱ Ch. 1. 2, 5. Tit. 1. 1. Gal. 5. 6. Eph. 2. 8. Col. 2. 12. 1 Thess. 1. 3. Jam. 2. 5.

C H A P. I.

THE apostle begins this epistle with a delicate praise of Timothy. He told him, that he gave thanks to God, that he had unceasing remembrance of him in his prayers, as a faithful minister of Christ, ver. 3.—And that recollecting the sensibility and gratitude, which he discovered by the tears of joy that he shed, when the apostle instructed him in the doctrines of the gospel, he had a strong desire to see him once more, now that he was in prison for their common Master, ver. 4.—That this desire was increased, when he called to remembrance the unfeigned faith which first dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and then in his mother Eunice, and he was persuaded in him also; so that Timothy was come of a pious race, ver. 5.—The apostle's thanksgiving to God in his secret prayers, for Timothy's faithfulness as a minister of Christ, I call *delicate praise*, because being bestowed in the presence of God, out of the hearing of the world, it was a praise in which there was neither insincerity nor flattery. The apostle, it is true, mentioned this to Timothy himself, along with the other particulars which were so honourable to him. But he did it in a letter to himself, and with no view, except to stir him up strenuously to exercise the spiritual gifts which were imparted to him, for the purpose of defending and spreading the gospel, ver. 6.—Moreover, to excite Timothy the more effectually to exercise his spiritual gifts for these ends, the apostle put him in mind, that, together with the spiritual gifts, God communicated to his faithful servants, fortitude, benevolence, and temperance, to enable them to exercise these gifts without fear, and in a prudent manner, for the benefit of mankind, ver. 7.—He, therefore, desired him not to be ashamed of the things which he was to preach concerning Christ, namely, that he is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world; neither to be ashamed of him his spiritual father, although a prisoner for preaching these things, but courageously to suffer evil jointly with him for the gospel through the assistance of God, ver. 8.—who hath saved both Jews and Gentiles; having called both into his kingdom by the gospel, not on account of their good works, as the Judaizers affirmed concerning their own

calling, but merely through faith in Christ from God's free grace, bestowed on them through Christ, agreeably to the promise of pardon and salvation made to the first parents of mankind at the fall, long before the Jewish dispensation began, ver. 9.—This promise, the apostle observed, was now published to all, through the appearing of Christ in the flesh; insomuch that the Gentiles, by the gospel, had obtained a clear knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of an eternal state of happiness hereafter for good men of all nations, who, before the gospel was published, had no certain knowledge of these great truths, ver. 10. Farther, the apostle assured Timothy, that to publish these joyful doctrines, he was himself appointed a *herald*, and an *apostle*, and a *teacher of the Gentiles*, ver. 11.—And that for preaching these doctrines to the Gentiles, and not for any crime, he now suffered the miseries of a jail. Nevertheless, he was not ashamed of his imprisonment, because he knew in whom he had believed, that he is the Son of God, and the Governor of the world, ver. 12. He therefore ordered Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words, in which he had delivered the doctrines of the gospel to him, as well as these doctrines themselves, which had been revealed to him by Christ, ver. 13.—Then he mentioned the desertion of the Judaizing teachers in Asia, ver. 15.—And spake with the warmest gratitude of the kindness of Onesiphorus, who had gone among the different prisons of Rome seeking him; and when he found him, had ministered to him with the greatest affection, as he had done to him formerly in Ephesus, as Timothy well knew, ver. 16, 17, 18.

II. TIMOTHY.] It is commonly supposed that this epistle was written during St. Paul's last imprisonment at Rome, not very long before he sealed the truth with his blood, (Ch. iv. 6—18.) about the year 67. That Timothy was at Ephesus, or in the Lesser Asia, when this epistle was sent to him, appears from the frequent mention in it of persons residing at Ephesus. The false teachers, who had before thrown this church into confusion, grew worse and worse every day; insomuch that *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, two Ephesian heretics, now denied the *resurrection of the dead*.

in thy grandmother Lois, and thy ^k mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, ^l that thou stir up the gift of God,

which is in thee by the ^m putting on of my hands.

7 ⁿ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

^k Acts, 16. 1. Exod. 15. 2. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Ps. 22. 10. & 71. 17. ^l See 1 Tim. 4. 14. Ch. 2. 1. & 4. 2, 5. 1 Thess. 5. 19. 20. ^m Acts, 6. 6. & 8. 17. & 13. 2, 3, 23. & 19. 6. 1 Tim. 4. 14. & 5. 22. ⁿ Rom. 8. 15. Heb. 2. 15. Luke, 24. 49. Acts, 1. 8. & 9. 22, 29. & 14. 3. & 18. 9. & 21. 13. 1 Cor. 10. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 3-10, 12. & 4. 1. & 6. 7. & 10. 4. Gal. 4. 3-7. Col. 1. 11. Ch. 2. 1. & 4. 17.

dead. They were led into this error by a dispute about words: at first they only annexed improper significations to the word *resurrection*, till at last they denied the thing; pretending that the resurrection of the dead was only a resurrection from the death of sin, and so was already past. This error was probably derived from the eastern philosophy, which placed the origin of sin in the body. The apostle's chief design in this epistle seems to have been, to prepare Timothy for those sufferings to which he foresaw he would be exposed; to forewarn him of the apostacy and corruption which had already begun, and would continue to advance in the church; and at the same time to animate him by his own example, and from the motives which the gospel furnishes, to the most vigorous and resolute discharge of every part of the sacred function, to which he had been called. St. Paul appears throughout this epistle, to have felt a strong conviction of the truth of those principles which he had embraced, and to glory in the sufferings that he had endured in the support of them; triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Master, and of receiving at his hands a crown of distinguished lustre. A behaviour like this, in one who had so considerable a share in establishing the Christian religion, and expected in a short time to seal his testimony with his blood, must be acknowledged a strong confirmation of the truth of those facts on which our faith depends; that the apostle himself was sincere in what he professed to believe; and that as he could not possibly be deceived himself, so he could have no design to deceive others.

Ver. 3.] St. Paul, in what follows, seems to intimate that the Judaizers were not only ashamed of him in his present sufferings, but gloried over him; so far were they themselves from being willing to suffer for righteousness sake. And as the danger in which the apostle then was, might probably make too deep an impression upon the mind of Timothy, and of other Christians, he takes occasion frequently to intimate, that he himself is neither afraid nor ashamed, notwithstanding his present distress and danger; and he hoped that Timothy would herein imitate him, and persevere in opposing the Judaizers, even more strenuously than when the apostle was at liberty to assist him. Many had gone off to the Judaizers; but labour and patience under sufferings was the way, under almighty grace, to glory and victory: cowardice and a regard to present ease was the way for men to miss of the glorious reward of eternal life. By such arguments the apostle pressed Timothy to live piously; to continue in his fidelity, and in fervent love with all true Christians; to preach the pure gospel doctrine, and to suffer for it with patience and meekness: but not by any means to be ashamed of it, or betray it,

ver. 3.—Ch. ii. 26. We may observe, that as St. Paul had been calumniated by the Jews as an apostate from the religion of his forefathers, he therefore declares the contrary here, as he does frequently elsewhere.

Ver. 4. *Greatly desiring to see thee,*] The intense thinking about a son who had endeared himself to his father in the gospel by a filial anxiety of heart, and many tears; who had suffered in all his afflictions, as well as rejoiced in his joy, must raise the most tender sentiments in the apostle's mind, and make him, though in a prison, long to see and embrace him, that he might give him his dying charge, and devolve the work of preaching and defending the gospel upon him, before he left the world. One may see in the very expressions, the tenderness of his sentiments under those affecting circumstances, and that he wrote with tears in his eyes, as well as a parental anxiety in his heart.

Ver. 5. *In thy grandmother Lois, &c.*] This is one *internal mark*, among a multitude, of the genuineness of this epistle: for we find, Acts, xvi. 1. that Timothy was of Jewish descent by his mother's side, but not by his father's. This, and many other such minute particulars, could not all of them have been exactly hit upon, if the writers of the New Testament had not been in those very circumstances, in which we suppose them to have been, when they wrote the several books ascribed to them. Perhaps the apostle, in reckoning up the pious ancestors of the pious evangelist, might have some reference to the second commandment: for, in a sense consistent with moral liberty, God will have mercy upon thousands of generations of them that love him, and keep his commandments.

Ver. 6. *Stir up the gift of God, &c.*] The word *Ἀναζευξάναι* properly signifies *to blow or stir up a fire*, when it is almost dead, or does not burn sufficiently. Possibly there might be some danger, lest the fierce and zealous opposition of the Judaizers, and the persecution which the apostle and his faithful adherents were then under, should damp Timothy's zeal, and caution him to let the sacred fire lie under embers. See 1 Thess. v. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Ver. 7. *God hath not given us the spirit of fear;*] St. Paul has frequent references in his epistles to the terror which accompanied the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, and intimates that the Judaizing Christians, who were so fond of the legal dispensation, were of a legal spirit;—a slavish spirit of bondage and fear, as if they had the thunder of Mount Sinai still in their ears—men of intimidated and mean spirits, who were afraid of suffering for their religion. But he takes care to point out the freedom and fortitude, the love and discretion of the true Christian spirit; and indeed *discretion, love, and fortitude* should always go hand in hand.

8 ° Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God ;

9 Who ^p hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, ^q not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ;

10 ^r But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who

hath ^s abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel :

11 ^t Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also ^u suffer these things : nevertheless ^v I am not ashamed : for I know whom I have ^w believed, and I am persuaded that ^x he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

° Rom. 1. 16. Mat. 10. 33. Mark, 8. 38. Acts, 5. 41. 1 Cor. 1. 6. & 2. 2. Eph. 3. 13. & 6. 20. 1 Tim. 1. 18. Ch. 2. 3, 9, 10. & 4. 5. Col. 1. 24. ^p 1 Tim. 1. 1. & 2. 3. & 4. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 14. Rom. 8. 30. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Heb. 3. 1. ^q Rom. 9. 11. & 3. 24. & 5. 20, 21. & 8. 29. Eph. 2. 8, & 1. 4. & 3. 11. Tit. 3. 4—7. & 1. 2. Rom. 16. 25. ^r 16. xxv. Rom. 16. 25, 26. Col. 1. 26, 27. Mark, 16, 15. Eph. 1. 9. & 3. 9. Tit. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 20, 21. ^s 16. 25. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55. Heb. 2. 14. ^t See Acts, 9. 15. & 22. 21. & 26. 16—18. Rom. 1. 5. & 11. 13. & 15. 16, 19. 1 Tim. 2. 7. ^u Ver. 8. Ch. 2. 9, 10. & 3. 10—12. & 4. 16, 17. ^v Eph. 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. Col. 1. 24. Acts, 20. 24. & 21. 13. & 5. 41. Rom. 5. 3—5. 2 Cor. 1. 3—10. Acts, 27. 23, 25. Pf. 91. 2. ^w Or trusted. ^x 1 Pet. 4. 19. Ch. 4. 8. Heb. 7. 25. 1 Pet. 1. 5. John, 10. 28, 29.

Ver. 8. *The testimony of our Lord,*] That is, “The gospel itself; and more particularly the freedom of the Gentile converts from all subjection to the law of Moses.” His prisoner means, Prisoner on his account, or for his sake. Heylin reads, *Be not thou ashamed of the gospel of our Lord, nor of me who am a prisoner upon his account.*

Ver. 9, 10. *Who hath saved us, &c.*] “Who hath rescued us out of the evil world, and called us to sanctity, not because we had deserved that mercy of his, but of his own free mercy and goodness long ago designed us in Christ; and now hath revealed it to us, and made us partakers of it, by Christ’s coming into the world, and preaching the gospel to us, who hath thereby voided the power of death over us, and made a clear revelation of that life and immortality which was not before so certainly revealed, that if we will believe in him and obey him, we may certainly be made partakers of it.” The phrase *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, which our version translates *before the world began*, is literally *before the secular ages, or before any age hath passed*, and so it ought to be rendered. The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, being made at the beginning of the world, the promise of that life to which we were to be restored by this seed, and had lost by the subtilty and malice of the serpent, is said to be given, *before any age hath passed*, or, as the great Mr. Locke explains it, *before the secular ages of the Jews*. But I shall explain this passage more fully, when I come to consider that exactly parallel one, Tit. i. 2, 3. to which I refer my readers.

It is to be acknowledged, that the heathens had, by tradition and the glimmering light of their dispensation, conceived some hope of some future good things to be received after this life was ended; that being absolutely necessary, says the apostle, that they might come to God, or do him any acceptable service: for, *he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. xi. 6. But yet this hope was very weak and feeble in them, and scarcely credited by their philosophers. It is stiled by Cicero (Tusc. Q. 1.) *A surmise of future ages*. It is, says Seneca, (Ep. 102.) *That which*

our wise men do promise, but they do not prove. Socrates, even at his death, speaks thus (Apol. in fine): *I hope to go hence to good men, but of that I am not very confident; nor doth it become any wise man to be positive that so it will be*. I, says he, *must now die, and you shall live; but which of us is in the better state, the living or the dead, God only knows*.

Mr. Parkhurst, under the word *φωτισμῶ*, observes, that it signifies “to bring to light,” and occurs, 1 Cor. iv. 5. and in the present text: and he translates the latter clause of the verse, *and hath brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel*: that is, not the doctrine, but the thing; Christ, by actually rising from the dead, has caused this important fact, as fulfilled in and by him, to be published by the gospel; (see 1 Cor. 15. 1, 4.) having manifested or exemplified in his own person that life and incorruption, which shall be the happy lot of all his faithful saints. See 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50—55. So when St. John, 1 Ep. i. 2. says in terms very similar to those of St. Paul, that *ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη*, *the life was manifested*, he does not refer to the doctrine of a future or eternal life; but to that which he had seen with his eyes, which he had looked upon, and his hands had handled; even the incarnate word, as is evident from the context. The word *φωτισμῶ* here used, is not merely opposed to the obscurity of the doctrine of life and immortality before the coming of Christ; but also to God’s preceding purpose, or promise of what was afterwards really fulfilled in our Redeemer, as a pledge of what should likewise be accomplished in all persevering believers. See 1 Cor. xv. 23. The reader will observe, that the apostle’s term is not *Ἀθανασία*, *immortality*, but *Ἀφθαρσίαν*, *incorruption*; as referring more particularly to the resurrection of the body. Comp. Acts, xiii. 34—37.

Ver. 12. *That which I have committed unto him*] “As to that momentous trust and treasure, inclusive of your spiritual gifts, and of the doctrine of the gospel, and your office as a minister to preach it, which is excellent in itself, and good for the use of edifying your own and others’ souls, to the glory of God and their salvation, and was committed by the Lord Jesus Christ to you at your solemn ordination; see that you be faithful in maintaining it against all the efforts of your enemies, and

13 ^a Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 ^a That good thing, which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knowest, ^b that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 ^c The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and ^d was not ashamed of my chain:

17 But, when he was ^e in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him ^f that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus thou knowest very well.

^a Prov. 23. 23. Phil. 1. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 10, 14. & 6. 3, 14, 20. Ch. 2. 2. & 3. 14. & 4. 3. Tit. 1. 9, 13. & 2. 1. 1 John, 2. 24, 27. 2 John, 6. 6, 9, 10. Rev. 2. 11. Jude, 3.
^b 1 Tim. 6. 20. & 4. 14. Ch. 21. 15. & 3. 14. with Rom. 8. 11. John, 14. 17, 26. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. & 6. 19, 21.
^c Ch. 4. 10, 16. Phil. 2. 21.
^d Eph. 6. 20. & 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1.
^e Mat. 10. 41, 42. & 25. 35-40. 1 Kings, 17. 13, 24. 2 Kings, iv. Ch. 4. 19.
^f Acts, 28. 16. Mat. 25. 35, 36, 40. Mat. 5. 7. Acts, 3. 19. Rom. 15. 25. 2 Thess. 1. 10. Ch. 4. 8.

“and in preserving it pure and uncorrupted, with religious care and diligence, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who permanently resides with peculiar relation and influence, and by his gifts and graces, in you and me, as he ever does, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, (Eph. iv. 7.) in all true believers and faithful ministers, (John, xiv. 16, 17.) to enable us to fulfil the duties of our stations, in the face of all opposition and danger.”

Ver. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words,*] *Hold fast in faith and love, &c. the form of sound words, &c.* Bengelius. *Retain well the idea of salutary doctrine which you have learned of me, concerning Christian faith and charity.* Heylin. The word ἵπocύπωσις, rendered *form*, signifies sometimes the same with the word τύπος; that is, a *plan, model, or pattern*; in which sense it may be understood here. See Rom. vi. 17. And surely, none can express the mind and will of God in sounder words, or more apt phrases, than the apostles, who were under the immediate and extraordinary illumination of the spirit. *Sound words* signify the pure gospel doctrine, delivered in the plain simple manner of the apostles; and as it leads men to a pious holy life, and does not lay the chief stress upon ceremonies and external things.

Ver. 15. *That all they which are in Asia, be turned away*] Hereby was the prophecy fulfilled, Acts, xx. 29, 30. [The *Asiatics* were infamous for their cowardice and dissimulation. St. Paul, it has been thought, alludes to their behaviour at Rome, Ch. iv. 16. of which Timothy might have been informed by travellers; but the text plainly intimates, that they were persons who were still in Asia. The apostle possibly mentions *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes* as known to Timothy, or as having distinguished themselves by their profession; so that there was particular reason to expect a different conduct from them.

Ver. 18. *The Lord grant unto him, &c.*] This is a common *Hebraism*. See Gen. i. 26, 27. ix. 6. 16. xix. 24. Isaiah, viii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.

Inferences—Shall an inspired apostle commit the true doctrine of Christ to ministers by immediate commission from God? And shall they not keep it pure and uncorrupt, and be ready to suffer for it, in dependence on his power, as exerted by the Holy Spirit? Or shall they preach it, and

the people not regard it? What a contempt is this of divine authority, and of the glorious gospel, at once! But O! happy souls, that serve God with a pure heart, and receive the gospel with unfeigned faith and love, after the example of religious ancestors; and lay themselves out to propagate it in like manner to others! It contains the promise of everlasting life through Jesus Christ; and sets the immortal life of soul and body, and the way of obtaining it, in the clearest light. Who would not be contented to undergo the severest persecutions, without fear, or shame, for the sake of the rich advantages that are to be hoped from it! May we have the firmest confidence in Christ, as the all-sufficient Saviour!—How dear is one sincere servant of Christ to another, as partakers of the same faith, and embarked in the same noble cause! How greatly do they all need, and how heartily do they wish, and daily pray for grace, mercy, and peace to be multiplied to one another, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! How affectionately are they desirous of each other's company, especially in times of great tribulation! How tenderly do they sympathize one with another in their afflictions! How concerned are they that a due improvement be made of the gifts of the Spirit, which are graciously bestowed upon their brethren in the ministry, who are endowed, according to the spirit of the gospel, not with a timorous, cowardly temper, but with holy fortitude and love, sobriety, wisdom, and sound judgment, for fulfilling their trust, in the midst of all difficulties, opposition, and danger! And while many desert the cause of Christ, and his suffering servants, like Phygellus and Hermogenes, blessed be God, there are others, who, like Onesiphorus, are not ashamed to own them in the worst of times; but are willing to seek opportunities of shewing all possible regard to them. May the Lord be gracious to such and their families; and grant them mercy to eternal life in the day of judgment!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, St. Paul opens this epistle,

1. With his apostolic salutation to Timothy. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, acting under a divine commission, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus, who hath brought life and immortality to light by his gospel; to Timothy, my dearly beloved son, sharing my warmest paternal affection: grace, mercy, and peace, with all*

C H A P. II.

Timothy is exhorted again to constancy and perseverance, and to do the duty of a faithful servant of the Lord, in dividing the word aright, and shunning prophane and vain babblings. Of Hymeneus and Philetus. The foundation of the Lord is sure. He is taught whereof to beware, and what to follow after; and in what sort the servant of the Lord ought to behave himself.

[Anno Domini 67.]

THOU therefore, ^a my son, ^b be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

^a See Ch. 1. 2. ^b Ch. 1. 7, 14. Eph. 6. 10. 11. 40. 29—31. & 45. 24. Zech. 10. 12. Phil. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 3. 5. & 12. 9, 10. ^c Ch. 1. 13. & 3. 10, 14. 1 Tim. 6. 12. & 4. 14. ^d 1 Tim. 5. 22. & 3. 2—7. Tit. 1. 5—9. ^e Ch. 1. 8. & 4. 5. 2 Cor. 10. 3—5. Eph. 6. 12. 1 Tim. 1. 8. ^f 1 Cor. 9. 7, 25. & 7. 32, 33. 1 Tim. 4. 15. Acts, 20. 22—24. Phil. 3. 12—14. with 1 Pet. 5. 4.

all the unutterable blessings therein contained, be with thee, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. *Note*; All our mercies come to us as the free gift of God in Jesus Christ, whether the present pardon, peace, and grace, which we receive here, or the promise of immortal life and glory which we expect hereafter.

2. He thanks God for him. *I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers*, as a true child of Abraham, and descendant of the patriarchs, *with pure conscience*, purged now from dead works by a Redeemer's blood, *that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day*, which I statedly offer at a throne of grace morning and evening, presenting thee also before the throne of grace at other times; *greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears*, and the distress which appeared at our last parting, *that I may be filled with joy*, if it so please the Lord, by our happy meeting again: and it more engages my heart to thee, *when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee*, and which has been proved on so many occasions, *which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also*, who treadest in the same steps. *Note*; (1.) It is a singular blessing to have religious parents; for though grace comes not by education, yet God often blesses effectually the labours of those who study to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (2.) Where unfeigned faith dwells, there every good fruit and gracious disposition will be produced.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Stirs up his dear son to the vigorous exercise of his ministry. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee*, blowing the embers of divine love and zeal into a flame, and making the most profitable use of those distinguished spiritual gifts which God hath bestowed upon thee *by the putting on of my hands*. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear*, that we should be discouraged by opposition, *but of power*, to bear up against every enemy undismayed, *and of love to Christ and men's souls*, which all the waters of persecution cannot quench, *and of a sound mind*, settled in the doctrines of truth, steady in attachment to them, and willing cheerfully to suffer for them. May such a spirit be in every minister!

2. He exhorts him to take up the cross boldly. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me*

2 And ^c the things that thou hast heard of me ^{*} among many witnesses, the same ^d commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore ^e endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 ^f No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries,

his prisoner, for they are honourable bonds which are borne for the sake of Jesus and his cause: *but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel*, sympathizing with those that suffer, and willing to endure any persecutions on account of the gospel, *according to the power of God*, which is engaged for the support of all those who are faithful. *Note*; (1.) All Christians, and ministers especially, must prepare for the cross, and expect it. (2.) They who dare commit their all to God, and look up to him for help, shall experience his almighty assistance in every time of need.

3. The apostle suggests the strongest motives to engage his fidelity to God and his gospel.—*Who hath saved us with a present salvation in and through the son of his love Christ Jesus, and hath called us with an holy calling by the word of the gospel*, that we might be separate from a world that lieth in wickedness, and sanctified for his honour and glory, *not according to our works*, for we deserve nothing but an eternal banishment from his presence, in which is the fulness of bliss; *but our salvation was according to his own purpose and grace*, which wills the salvation of all men, and renders the reprobate who wilfully reject that grace utterly inexcusable; and *was given us in Christ Jesus in and through whom every blessing is conveyed to and possessed by the faithful saint, before the world began*, before the secular ages of the Jews, and, in his infinite prescience, from all eternity—but *is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who*, coming in the human nature, had made the richest discoveries of God's grace to perishing sinners; and, by dying on the cross as their substitute, *hath abolished death*, delivering every faithful saint from the wages of sin, the curse of the law, and all the fearful consequences thereof in time and eternity; *and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, giving a brighter and clearer revelation of the eternal blessedness prepared for body and soul in a better world, and of the way which only leads thereto, than had before been made to the sons of men. *Note*; Every faithful soul may regard death as a vanquished foe: when the sting of sin is taken out, we have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope; while through the grave we see the golden gates of life and immortality unfolded, and the bright beams of everlasting glory illuminating the dark valley of the shadow of death.

4. He proposes to him his own example. *Wherunto I*

am

yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 * The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

* 1 Cor. 9. 10. with Luke, 10. 2. & 20. 9.

* Or the husbandman, labouring first, must be partaker of the fruits.

am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles, and count it my highest honour; for the which cause I also suffer these things, being now the prisoner of Jesus Christ for my fidelity in maintaining the privileges of the Gentiles; nevertheless I am not ashamed, neither of the gospel, nor of the chain that he wore for the sake of it; for I know whom I have believed, the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace; and I am persuaded that he is able, as his promises assure me he is willing in respect to all persevering believers, to keep that which I have committed unto him, even the precious deposit of my immortal soul, against that day, that great day of his appearing and glory. *Note;* Though we suffer for the gospel, we need not be ashamed; the cause will gloriously support us.

5. He exhorts him to fidelity. *Hold fast the form of sound words, the sacred and unadulterated oracles of God, and the pure doctrines of the gospel, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus; copy the pattern of my preaching, especially in these fundamental articles; and as thy faith in and love to the Redeemer, have appeared, urge upon your hearers the same blessed truths with all fidelity and warm affection. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us; be faithful to the solemn trust committed to thee; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, who abides in the hearts of all his people, maintain the purity of the gospel with persevering diligence. Note;* (1.) Jesus is the glorious object of our faith and love, and to him should our hearts for ever cleave. (2.) The Lord must keep us, or we cannot keep ourselves; and the indwelling energy of the Holy Ghost alone can enable us for the discharge of every sacred trust which he hath committed to us.

3dly, To engage his dear son Timothy's fidelity, he mentions the apostacy of some as a warning, and the steadfastness of Onesiphorus, as an encouragement to him.

1. The apostacy of some. *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, either the generality of the Asiatic ministers and churches, or such of the Asiatics as were or had been at Rome, who were ashamed of his chain, and disowned him in his imprisonment out of fear; of whom are Phygellus and Hermodenes. Note;* It is one of the bitterest pangs of suffering, to feel ourselves then deserted by those from whom we might reasonably, from their professions, have expected the greatest comfort and support.

The steadfastness of Onesiphorus. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: probably he was an Ephesian, and absent from his family with the apostle, whom he attended and served with great fidelity and zeal; and therefore the grateful Paul, in return, repays him with his prayers, begging, that the choicest blessings of God might descend upon him and his; for he oft refreshed me with seasonable visits, and supplies of necessaries, and was not ashamed of my chain, when cowardice and fear of reproach barely deterred others from coming near me. But when he*

was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day, when Jesus shall come to reward every kindness shewn to his servants, especially to those who are suffering for righteousness' sake. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well. Note; (1.) When we can make no other return to our kind friends, we are bound at least to recommend them in our prayers to the Saviour's mercy, and beg of him to reward them in that day. (2.) That day! How should it be ever in our view, that great decisive day, when our eternity of happiness or misery must be determined! (3.) We have nothing to cry for at God's hands, but mercy; living or dying, the best have no merit to plead, but must expect eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER II.

BECAUSE the Judaizing teachers in Asia had all cast off St. Paul as an apostle, and because it was not in his power to oppose their corrupt doctrines in person, he ordered Timothy to be strong in the exercise of his spiritual gifts, and in preaching the unspeakable benefits bestowed on Jews and Gentiles without distinction, through Christ, and not through the law of Moses, ver. 1.—and the things concerning Christ; namely, that he is the Son of God; that he died for our sins; that he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God, governing the universe; and that he will return to judgment; also salvation by faith alone in Christ; and all the experimental truths of the gospel; all which Timothy had heard from the apostle, as facts and doctrines confirmed by the testimony and experience of many witnesses: these he ordered him to commit to faithful men, capable of inculcating them on others, who, in their turn, should hand them down in like manner; that the knowledge of them might be continued among mankind to the end of the world, ver. 2.

But in regard that Timothy, by preaching these things, would expose himself to much persecution, the apostle exhorted him to endure evil treatment as a good soldier, of Jesus Christ, ver. 3.—imitating ordinary soldiers, who hold themselves in constant readiness to march and fight, that they may please their commanders, ver. 4.—imitating also those who contend in the games, who do not expect to be crowned, unless they observe all the rules of the combat, ver. 5.—and husbandmen, who must labour, before they partake of the fruits of the ground which they cultivate, ver. 6, 7.—Farther, he desired him faithfully to do the work of an evangelist, by frequently calling to remembrance, and preaching, that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, though put to death by the Jews as a deceiver, was raised from the dead, and thereby demonstrated to be the Son of God, according to the apostle's gospel, ver. 8.—for the preaching of which he was now bound in chains as a malefactor, ver. 9. But he bore his sufferings with joy, for

7^b Consider what I say; and ¹ the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ ^k of the seed of David ^l was raised from the dead according to ^m my gospel:

^h Deut. 22. 29. Heb. 3. 1. & 12. 3. Luke, 9. 44. Acts, 7. 11. & 16. 14.
ⁱ John, 2. 20, 27. ^k 2 Sam. 7. 11. Pl. 132. 11. If. 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5, 6.
 2. 4—7. Rom. 1. 3. Rev. 5. 5. & 22. 16. ^l Acts, 2. 24. Rom. 1. 4.
^m Rom. 2. 16. & 3. 16. & 15. 19. Ch. 1. 10, 11. 1 Tim. 1. 11, 12. & 2. 7.
 3. 18. Ch. 1. 8, 12. Acts, 24. 5. ^o Phil. 1. 12, 13. 2 Theff. 3. 1.

9^a Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, *even* unto bonds; but ^{*} the word of God is not bound.

10^p Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the

¹ Col. 1. 9. Eph. 1. 18, 19. & 3. 16—19. John, 16. 13. & 14. 26.
 Ezek. 34. 23, 24. Mat. 1. 1—17, 20. & 15. 24. Luke, 1. 27, 32. &
 1 Cor. 15. 1—8. Mat. xxviii. Mark, xxi. Luke, xxiv. John, xx.
ⁿ Eph. 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. Phil. 1. 7. Col. 1. 24. & 4.
^p Eph. 3. 1, 13. Phil. 2. 37. Col. 1. 24. 2 Cor. 1. 4, 6. Ver. 11, 12.

for the sake of the Gentiles elected to be the visible church of God; that they might obtain salvation through the preaching of the gospel, ver. 10.—And to encourage Timothy, and all the ministers of Christ who should read this letter, to faithfulness in preaching the gospel, and to courage in suffering for it, he set before them this greatest of all motives, that if they suffer death with Christ, they shall also live with him, ver. 11.—Whereas, if through fear of persecution and death they deny him, by concealing or misrepresenting the things concerning him, he will, at the day of judgment, deny that they are his servants, ver. 12. —This Christ had expressly declared, Matth. x. 33, and he certainly will do it: for he cannot deny himself, ver. 13.—All these things the apostle ordered Timothy to represent; as the Judaizing teachers perverted the doctrines of the gospel, to render them conformable to the prejudices of the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, hoping thereby to avoid persecution. Also he ordered him earnestly to testify to them, as in the presence of the Lord; not to fight about the meaning of detached words and sentences in the law, from which nothing could result but the subversion of the hearers, ver. 14.—And, with respect to Timothy's own conduct, the apostle ordered him to present himself to God an approved unashamed workman, who rightly divided the word of truth among his hearers, ver. 15.—Then he counselled him to shun the profane empty babbling of the Judaizers in their discourses about the law, because such a method of talking led to more impiety, ver. 16.—and was of an infectious nature, corrupting the mind as a gangrene does the body. He then mentioned Hymeneus and Philetus, two bigoted Judaizers, whose vain babbling led to more and more impiety, ver. 17.—For by affirming that the resurrection was accomplished when men believed, they denied the resurrection of the dead, and overturned the faith of some, who had expected a future eternal life in the body in consequence of their resurrection, ver. 18.—But although these and other ungodly teachers, by opposing the doctrine of the apostles, denied their inspiration and authority, the truths to which the apostles bore testimony remained firmly placed, as the foundation on which the church of God is built, ver. 19.—Further, that Timothy and the faithful at Ephesus might not entertain wrong thoughts of God, for permitting false teachers in his church; the apostle observed, that it is in the church as in a great house, where there are vessels made of different materials, some for an honourable and some for a dishonourable use, ver. 20.—but that if any teacher, by the power of divine grace, cleanse himself from false doctrines, unholy tempers, and bad practices, he will

be in the house of God a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use, ver. 21.—And that Timothy might be such a teacher, the apostle gave him a variety of directions and advices, respecting his behaviour and method of teaching, ver. 22—25.

Ver. 2. *And the things that thou hast heard of me*] The apostles alone had the whole scheme of the Christian revelation from our Lord Jesus Christ. The prophets, evangelists, and elders, of the Christian church, as well as other Christians, learned it from the apostles; who desired and ordered that there should be a succession of men to teach it.

Ver. 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself, &c.*] The Roman soldiers were not suffered to be tutors to any person, curators of another man's estate, proctors for other men's causes, or to undertake husbandry or merchandize.

Ver. 5. *If a man also strive for masteries,*] *And if a man combat in the public games, he is not crowned, unless he has observed the rules prescribed.* Heylin. If, in the Grecian games, they contended according to the rules prescribed, and came off conquerors, they were honoured with a crown of parsley, laurel, or bays: in like manner, if Timothy, through the power of grace, divested himself of the inordinate love of temporal things, and contended according to the Christian rules, he was at last, through the mercy of God, to attain an incorruptible crown of glory.

Ver. 6. *The husbandman that laboreth, &c.*] *Or The husbandman must first labour, to partake of the fruits.* Heylin, and Bowyer.

Ver. 7. *Give thee understanding in all things.*] *Grant you industry in all things.* Castalio. Some read, *Consider what I say, for [if you do so] the Lord will give you understanding in all things.* Others connect *all things* with the next verse;—*In all things remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, &c.*

Ver. 8. *According to my gospel:*] That is, “The gospel which I have preached.” St. Paul seems to say, *My Gospel*, by way of emphasis, in opposition to the false gospel delivered by Hymeneus and Philetus; who perhaps preached, *That the resurrection was past*: therefore the apostle calls upon Timothy, *To remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead*,—the true Messiah, lineally descended from David; who, like David, endured a variety of sufferings; but being raised from the dead, affords a thousand arguments to his followers to support their sufferings like him, in confident hope of the same resurrection.

Ver. 9. *Wherein*] *For which.* Heylin and Whitby.

salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 ^a *It is a faithful saying*: For, ' if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him* :

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: ' if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

13 ' If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 ^b Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they ^c strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

15 ^d Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 ^e But thou profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a * cancer: of whom is ^f Hymeneus and Philetus;

18 ^g Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless, ' the foundation of God standeth † sure, having this seal, ^h The Lord

^a 1 Tim. 1. 15. & 3. 1. & 4. 9. Prov. 22. 27. Titus, 3. 8. ^f Rom. 6. 5, 8. & 8. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 10. Gal. 2. 20. 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 13. Phil. 3. 10. John, 16. 2, 3, 23. Acts, 14. 22. Mat. 19. 28, 29. & 16. 24, 25. & 10. 32. ^g Mat. 10. 33. Mark, 8. 38. Luke, 9. 26. & 12. 9. ^h Rom. 3. 3. & 9. 6. Numb. 23. 19. 2 Cor. 1. 20. Titus, 1. 2. Heb. 6. 17. ⁱ Rom. 15. 16. 1 Tim. 5. 21. & 6. 13. Ch. 4. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 12—15. ^j Acts, 15. 24. & 20. 30. 1 Tim. 1. 4. & 6. 4. Titus, 3. 9, 11. 2 Pet. 2. 1. ^k Titus, 3. 2, 7, 8. 1 Tim. 2. 12—16. 1 Cor. 2. 4. & 3. 2. ^l Cor. 4. 2. John, 16. 12. Acts, 20. 27. Eph. 1. 19, 20. 1 Thess. 1. 5. & 2. 7. Ver. 14, 25. ^m 1 Tim. 1. 4. & 4. 7. & 6. 4, 5, 10. Titus, 1. 14. & 3. 9. Ch. 3. 13. ⁿ Or garglets. ^o 1 Tim. 1. 20. ^p 1 Tim. 6. 21. & 1. 6. 1 Cor. 15. 12. Col. 3. 1. ^q Mat. 24. 24. Rom. 9. 11. & 11. 7. 1 Tim. 6. 19. Job, 19. 25, 26. Is. 28. 16. & 46. 10. 1 John, 2. 19. & 3. 9. † Or steady. ^r Nah. 1. 7. John, 10. 14, 17. & 13. 18. Rom. 8. 28—30, 33, 34. & 11. 2. Numb. 16. 5.

Ver. 10. For the elect's sake,] By the *elect*, St. Paul here seems more particularly to mean the *Gentile converts*; for *He* suffered as the apostle of the Gentiles; and he often intimates, that unless he through grace had so laboured and suffered, and they persevered in holiness and piety, both he and they would have missed of salvation and eternal glory. See 1 Thess. iii. 5.

Ver. 11. It is a faithful saying :] Some refer these words to the concluding clause of the former verse; but it seems much more reasonable to connect them with what follows; as, generally speaking, this phrase is introductory to the weighty sentence which it is intended to confirm. Heylin reads, *This is a certain truth; if we die with him, &c.* Archbishop Tillotson thinks, that this was a celebrated saying among the Christians, which was derived by tradition either from Christ, or some of his apostles: and it had so powerful a tendency to keep them steady to their holy religion, that it is no wonder it was in frequent use.

Ver. 13. If we believe not,] *If we are unfaithful,—yet he continues faithful;* [as well in his threatenings as in his promises:] *he cannot contradict himself.* Heylin. A man may be *unfaithful*, by denying the Christian religion, or rejecting it; by corrupting it, or mingling another doctrine with it; or, by living unworthy of it. If *we* should prove *unfaithful* any of these ways, yet *Christ is faithful*, and must disown us, as being none of his disciples. The *unfaithfulness* here spoken of, seems to have been, denying the Christian religion in time of persecution, in order to avoid suffering.

Ver. 14. Charging them before the Lord] There is a most awful solemnity in this charge; which plainly shews the great folly and mischief of striving about little controversies: and it would be well if all the ministers of Christ were deeply affected with a sense of this, lest what they profess to hold most sacred, be itself torn in pieces, while they are struggling about its fringes.

Ver. 15. Rightly dividing the word of truth.] The Vulgate, no doubt, has given in general the true sense of this

expression, by rendering it, *Rectè tractantem verbum veritatis*, "rightly handling the word of truth:" but it is not so easy to determine, whence in particular the metaphorical word ὀρθοτάτης, *cutting aright*, or *straight*, is taken. Some suppose it alludes to the *cutting up* and *dividing* the sacrifices by the Levitical priests; others, to the *dividing* and dispensing food at a table, or to the distribution made by a *seward*, in delivering out to each person under his care such things, as his office and their necessities required. Compare Luke, xii. 42. Price refers it to the *exact cutting*, or *polishing* of stone or marble: Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Ecumenius explain it of *cutting off* all superfluous and useless matter in preaching God's word, (as carriers do, in skins that they are preparing for use; compare ver. 16.) but Theodoret thinks it is a metaphor taken from husbandmen. "We commend (says he,) even those husbandmen "who cut straight furrows: so, that preacher is worthy "of praise, who follows the rule of the divine oracles." And to this last interpretation I must confess myself most inclined,—because our blessed Lord himself illustrates the duty of a minister of his gospel by a similar allusion, Luke, ix. 62.—because St. Paul had just before called Timothy Ἐργάτην, which, though applied to other workmen, properly signifies a *husbandman*;—and also because the word ὀρθοτάτης in the LXX. signifies to *cut*, or *make straight*, in the only two passages of that version where it occurs; namely, Prov. iii. 6. xi. 5. To all which we may add, that, though it may be doubted whether the verb ὀρθοτάτης be ever in the Greek writers applied to *husbandmen's ploughing*, yet in Theocritus, Idyll. x. l. 2. we have the term ὀρθὸν ἀγρὸν ὀρθῶν,—*to draw, or make a straight furrow.*

Ver. 17, 18. Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus;] Among the various conjectures concerning the opinions of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, it seems most probable that they insisted, that the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead* was to be understood only in a spiritual or figurative sense; or that it was the same with *regeneration*, or being born of God.

CHAP. III.

He advertiseth him of the times to come, describeth the enemies of the truth, propoundeth unto him his own example, and commendeth the holy scriptures.

[Anno Domini 67.]

THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

^a 2 Pet. 2. 1. & 3. 3. Jude, 18. 1 John, 2. 18. Dan. 7. 8, 20—25. & 11. 36—39. 1 Thess. 2. 3—12. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. Ch. 4. 3, 4. Rev. vi. viii. ix. xi—xiii. xvii. ^b Phil. 2. 27. 2 Pet. 3. 2, 12—19. Titus, 1. 11. Jude, 11. 16. Rom. 1. 30. Rev. 13. 5, 6. ^c 2 Pet. 2. 10—12. Jude, 4, 8, 12. Rom. 1. 31. Rev. 13. 2, 5—7. & 11. 7—10. ^d Or *makebates*, or *devils*.

useful to ministers, or to private Christians, than that of the apostle in this chapter, taken in all its extent,—*Remember Jesus Christ*. Many a sweet memorial has he left us of himself. Often, very often, have we been called solemnly to survey them, and yet how ready are we to forget him, and by a natural consequence to forget ourselves, our duty and interest on the one hand, and our danger on the other! “Blessed *Jesus*! may we daily and hourly “remember thee! that thou hast died, that thou art raised “from the dead, and that thou art ever near to thy believing “people, to protect, to comfort, and to bless them. If, “for thy cause, we should be called to *suffer evil, as evil “doers*, whether in our persons, or reputations, may we “not be discouraged, but rather *rejoice* in the honour thou “doest us in appointing for us such a conformity to thy “self! The enemies of thy *gospel* may indeed oppose it, “they may *bind* its most faithful preachers; but their opposition, their persecution, is *vain*.” *The word of God is not bound*; and divine grace, operating by it, will sooner or later give it the intended, the promised, triumph; that all the faithful saints of God may obtain *salvation by Jesus Christ*, and may not only escape the condemnation and ruin of the impenitent world, but may finally be crowned with *eternal glory*.

May we ever be mindful of this *faithful word*, that if we *suffer with Christ*, we shall *reign with him* too; and may we endure the greatest hardships to which we can be called out, as considering that the *sufferings* are *momentary*, but the *reign* will be *eternal*. Never may we, for any allurements or terror, *deny him*, as we would not finally be *denied* by him; when no other honour will remain but that which he confers, no other happiness but that which he bestows.

In the mean time, as we desire the prosperity of his kingdom, let us earnestly pray that he will raise up to his church a multitude of *faithful ministers*, who may govern themselves by these truly *apostolical canons*; ministers, who may not *contend about words* in a manner *unprofitable* and *vain*, who may not *amuse* their hearers with empty *harangues* about insignificant *curiosities* or perplexing *subtleties*; but may, in the integrity of their hearts, endeavour to *approve themselves to God*, as *workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*. And may divine grace preserve the church from those *seducing teachers*, whose doctrine, like a secret *gangrene*, might spread itself so that the *joint* of many might be *overthrown*.

But how affecting a representation is here made of the wretched state of sinners! they are described as *sleeping in*

2 For men shall be ^b lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 ^c Without natural affection, truce-breakers, * false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Satan's snare, like birds in a net, taken alive, and at the fowler's mercy; while they imagine they can spring up whenever they please, and range at full liberty. Alas! they will soon perceive their fatal *captivity*: but they will perceive it too late, if they be not quickly *awakened*. Who would not wish to do something for their recovery? Let the *ministers* of the gospel pity them. Let us pray that *God would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*. Let us try every *gentle method* which the sincerest compassion can dictate, toward effecting so happy a design, and not suffer ourselves to be transported to undue *severities* of language, or of sentiments, even though we should receive the greatest injuries where we intend the most important kindness.

Let those that have the honour to bear the most *holy character*, which any office can devolve on mortal man, avoid, with the greatest care, every thing that would bring a stain, or even a suspicion upon it. Let them revere the voice of the great *apostle*, while it animates them to *pursue righteousness* and *faith, love and peace, with all their fellow-Christians* of every denomination, with all that *invoke Christ*, and that trust in him. So shall they be *vessels of honour*; so may they humbly hope that their *Lord* will condescend to make some special *use* of them, for the purposes of his own glory, and the salvation of their fellow-creatures.

To conclude. What is it to us, that the *Lord knows*, distinguishing, and favours his saints, and that his almighty power protects them, if we are ourselves found among the *wicked, with whom he is angry every day*,—among the workers of iniquity, whom he will publicly disown, and to whom he will say, *I know not whence you are*. To name the name of *Christ* with dispositions like these, will be to injure and profane it; and our profession itself will be interpreted as an act of hostility against him, whom we have presumed so vainly to call the Foundation of our hopes, and the Sovereign of our souls.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle in this chapter continues his exhortations. *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, sensible of thy own weakness, and dependant upon him who alone can enable thee for the arduous work. *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses*, publicly declared, and proved by numerous testimonies of the law and prophets, *the same commit thou to faithful men*, whose sincerity and abilities have been tried and approved, *who shall be able to teach others also*, and preserve the *glorious truths* of gospel grace unadulterated,

- 4^d Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ing the power thereof: from such turn away.
- 5^o Having a form of godliness, but deny- 6 For of this sort are they which creep into

^a Mat. 10. 21. & 21. 9, 10. Phil. 3. 19. Dan. 7. 8, 20, 25. & 11. 30—19. Rev. 9. 8. & 13. 5—7. & 17. 5. ^b Tit. 1. 16. Mat. 7. 15. with Acts, 3. 17. Tit. 2. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 8. ^c Rom. 16. 17, 18. 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14. Ch. 2. 16. 23. Tit. 3. 10. Mat. 23. 17. 2 Job, 10. 11. ^d Tit. 1. 11. Mat. 23. 14. Mark, 12. 40. Rom. 16. 18. Eph. 4. 14.

adulterated. *Thou therefore endure hardness*, all those persecutions and afflictions to which, in the gospel warfare, thou mayest be exposed, acquitting thyself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, fighting manfully under his banners with such courage, patience, and perseverance, as may effectually secure the crown. *No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*; his military service is incompatible with the pursuit of any other trade or profession; he must be at the General's call, and ever ready to obey his orders, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier; so must every minister of Christ be disengaged from worldly concerns, that he may be wholly employed in the service of the great Captain of our salvation, and make it his whole study and care to please him, and advance the interests of his kingdom. *And if a man also strive for masteries in the Olympic games, yet is he not crowned with that fading crown the reward of victory, except he strive lawfully*, according to the rules prescribed; and much more should they, who have before them a crown of glory incorruptible, exert every effort according to the orders of their divine Master, to win the eternal prize. *The husbandman that laboureth, must be first partaker of the fruits*; or the husbandman must labour first, before he partakes of the fruits; so must the faithful minister labour for the good of immortal souls, and patiently wait for the success of his ministry, and the expected reward in the day of Christ. *Consider what I say*; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things, enabling thee to make deep application of these things to thy own soul; and, as a valiant soldier, a brave combatant and laborious husbandman, to acquit thyself in thy ministerial office. *Note*; Let all who look to the ministry, consider these things, and count the cost before they presume to appear candidates for the service.

2dly, To encourage him boldly to suffer, the apostle suggests,

1. The grand foundation of their hope, as built upon the resurrection of Jesus. *Remember that Jesus Christ*, the promised Messiah, of the seed of David, in his human nature, was raised from the dead, shewing thereby the complete atonement he had made for the sins of the world, and the full redemption which he had obtained for all his faithful saints, according to my gospel which I preached unto you.

2. He sets before him his own example: *wherein, that is, for preaching which gospel, I suffer trouble as an evil deer even unto bonds*; but the word of God is not bound: even in my prison the gospel still runs and is glorified in the conversion of many souls, and others boldly labour at large, though I am confined. *Therefore*, dependant upon the power of God, I endure all things for the elect's sake, willing to endure, if I am called thereunto, even death itself, that they may also obtain (confirmed in the faith by my unshaken steadfastness in suffering for it) the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory, of which he is the author,

finisher, and bestower, on all those, and only those, who perseveringly believe in him. *Note*; A noble example is a powerful encouragement to follow on.

3. The reward of faithful suffering should engage him boldly to take up the cross. *It is a faithful saying*: for if we be dead with him, as vitally united to him in death, or if called to die for his cause, as he died for us, we shall also live with him, planted also in the likeness of his resurrection, and raised up to immortal life and glory: if we suffer for him, we shall also reign with him, sitting down on his throne: but if we prove faithless, and deny him in the hour of temptation, he also will deny and disown us in the great day of his appearing: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; his promises and threatenings will surely be accomplished, whether men believe them or not: he is immutable, and cannot deny himself, or falsify his word. *Note*; (1.) It is our privilege to suffer, when we see that the issue will be so glorious. (2.) The hope of life with Jesus, should raise us superior to all the fears of death, though in its most tremendous form. (3.) They who, for any worldly interest or advantage, or to avoid shame, reproach, or suffering, disown the Lord Jesus, his gospel, and suffering servants,—they shall bear in eternity their burden, and be driven from his presence with everlasting contempt.

3dly, The apostle proceeds to give further exhortations to Timothy:

1. To seek the edification of those who were under his charge. *Of these things put them in remembrance*; charging them, with all solemnity and authority before the Lord, as in his presence, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, drawing them from the purity of the gospel, instead of promoting godly edifying. *Note*; Any trivial matter will afford occasion of strife to a contentious spirit.

2. He enjoins him to shew himself an able minister of Jesus Christ. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, diligent, faithful, laborious, skillful, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to each his portion in due season, according to the various cases and conditions of the people's souls. *But shun profane and vain babblings*, the dreams of the Judaizing teachers, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and lead to the most pernicious errors in principles and practice. *And their word will eat as doth a canker*, corroding the hearts of the hearers, and threatening their eternal death: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, the chief heretical seducers; who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already; probably they asserted, that the resurrection was only mystical and spiritual, not of the body but of the soul; and have overthrown the faith of some. *Note*; (1.) Error is as spreading as a gangrene; and, though it may appear little at first, threatens the most fatal consequences. (2.) They who love to hear themselves talk,

houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7^b Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

^a Ch. 4. 3, 4. Prov. 26. 14. Deut. 29. 4. If. 27. 11. & 28. 9, 10.

talk, will be sure to prove the truth of that scripture, that in the multitude of words there wanteth not folly. (3.) A true minister will labour to speak ever to the purpose, not curious about a fine harangue, but careful to apply the word of truth to the consciences of his hearers.

4thly, Among all the errors of deceivers, this is *nevertheless* our comfort :

1. That *the foundation of God standeth sure*. Let not these and the like false, impious, heretical teachers move you ; for God will certainly perform his promise to all his faithful saints : his bill of contract in Christ with such, his decree and purpose towards them, remains unchangeable, being under seal ; and the seal of this contract has two impresses : on one side this, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*, God is sure to all those that are faithful to him, to reward them both in body and soul to all eternity. The impress on the other side is, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity* ; every Christian obliges himself to a holy life (quite contrary to the experience and practices of the deceivers here referred to) by undertaking the faith of Christ.

2. *But as in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth ; and some to honour, and some to dishonour*, so it need not be thought strange, that in the visible church, while some professors adorn the gospel, others appear a scandal to the name they bear, a dishonour to the Redeemer, and will at last be rejected by him. *If a man therefore purge himself from these errors and practices of the seducing teachers, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work*, employed by him on earth with approbation, and, after having finished the work which he hath given him to do below, shall be removed to shine in his better temple of eternal glory above. Lord, may my lot be with these !

5thly, Some personal directions are here given to the young evangelist.

1. *Flee youthful lusts*, not merely those of the flesh, but the still more dangerous ones of pride, love of pre-eminence, and popular applause, those fatal rocks against which so many make shipwreck, and which need to be shunned with peculiar care. *But,*

2. *Follow righteousness towards God and men, faith, charity, peace*, with all the other train of heavenly tempers which abide in them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. *Note* ; They who are Christians indeed, are constant at a throne of grace, and, in purity of heart and life, prove their professions sincere.

3. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes*, and open a field of endless and unprofitable controversy. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive* ; the follower of the Lamb of God should copy the pattern of his meekness, not be quarrelsome, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach in the most offensive way, patient under the provocations of the most untractable, and the prejudices of the weak ; in meekness instructing those that op-

pose themselves against the gospel doctrines ; mildly arguing, and gently remonstrating, desirous to win them by love, and overcome them with kindness ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, as it is in Jesus ; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will, as the birds in the snare of the fowler, where they must lie and perish, unless through the power of divine grace they turn to God, and yield themselves to his holy will and service. *Note* ; (1.) Nothing is more necessary for a minister than unwearied patience and meekness. (2.) The gospel word is the great instrument which the Lord employs for the conversion of the heart. (3.) They are the vilest of slaves who are led by the devil's beck to the service of divers lusts and pleasures ; and happy is it for the soul that is delivered from this dreadful servitude by the power of divine grace, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

CHAP. III.

THE apostle having, in the end of the preceding chapter, informed Timothy, that for wise reasons false teachers were suffered to arise, in the beginning of this chapter foretels, that in future times, through the pernicious influence of the corrupt doctrines propagated by false teachers, many in the Christian church, and among the rest the false teachers themselves, would become so wicked, that it would be dangerous to the faithful to live among them, ver. 1.—Christians, so called, would in general be unmeasurably selfish, scandalously covetous of money, boasting of being high in favour with God on account of mere externals, insolent on that account, blasphemers of God by the injurious representations which they would give of his character and will, disobedient to parents, ungrateful to benefactors, unholy in their disposition ; ver. 2. without the affections natural to mankind, avowed covenant-breakers, slanderers of those who maintained the truth, addicted to all the lusts of the flesh, furious against those who would oppose their corrupt practices, having no love to good men, ver. 3.—betrayers of trusts, headstrong in their errors, swollen with pride, and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, ver. 4.—And to shew that in this description the teachers of religion were comprehended, the apostle added, that the persons of whom he spake, in order to conceal their enormous wickedness, would make loud pretensions to their being of the true church ; they were to have the outward appearance of godliness, but in practice they would deny its power. And because some teachers of this character were then beginning to shew themselves, the apostle ordered Timothy to avoid them, ver. 5.—Of this sort, he told him, those teachers were, who, on pretence of instructing the female part of families, led captive silly women laden with sins, by assuming the direction of their consciences, ver. 6.—and who detained them in bondage, by keeping them always learning, and

8 Now as ^l Jannes and Jambres withstood of corrupt minds, * reprobate concerning the Moses, so do these also resist the truth : ^k men faith.

^l Exod. 7. 11, 22. & 8, 7, 18.

^k 1 Tim. 1. 19. & 6, 5, 1. Tit. 1. 16. Rom. 1. 28. 2 Cor. 13. 5, 6.

* Or of no judgment.

and never leading them to the experimental knowledge of the truth, ver. 7.

This part of the chapter is generally, and I think justly, considered as a prediction of the apostacy from the true faith and practice of the gospel, which early began to take place in the Christian church, but which was not carried to its height, till the Roman empire in the West was overturned by the incursions of the barbarous northern nations.—Of that apostacy St. Paul had prophesied twice before; namely, 2 Theff. ii. 3—12. and 1 Tim. iv. 1—5. In the first of these passages, the blasphemous claims of the corrupters of Christianity in later ages, their feigned miracles, and other base arts by which they were to establish their usurped authority in the church, are described. In the second passage, the impious doctrines and superstitious practices which by virtue of that authority they were to introduce, are particularly set forth. But in this epistle, the influence of the ungodly doctrines and superstitious practices of the promoters of the apostacy, in corrupting the morals both of the teachers and of the people, are more minutely foretold.—These three prophecies, taken together, exhibit such a striking portrait of the characters, pretensions, and practices of the promoters of the apostacy, that no intelligent reader, who is acquainted with the history of the church, can doubt that the erroneous doctrines and superstitious practices which were early introduced, and which were supported by persons of the greatest reputation, are in these prophecies foretold to end in that monstrous fabric of spiritual tyranny, which the bishops of Rome, assisted by their clergy, erected; and in that universal corruption of manners which it occasioned. As little can he doubt that the predictions of these evils recorded in scripture, were designed by the Spirit of God to convince the faithful in after-times, who were to be witnesses of the apostacy, that it had happened by the permission of God, who often makes the wickedness of men instrumental in accomplishing his greatest purposes.

Left, however, the knowledge of that great and universal corruption which was to take place in the church, might have led Timothy and the brethren at Ephesus to fear that the church would never recover from such a sad state, the apostle observed, that the opposition of the authors and promoters of the apostacy to the truth, was of the same nature, and would end in the same manner, as the opposition of Pharaoh's magicians to Moses. For as Jannes and Jambres resisted him by false miracles, so the promoters of the apostacy, being men corrupted in mind, would resist the true doctrines of the gospel by feigned miracles and other base arts, ver. 8.—But they would not be permitted to go on in their deceits longer than the time determined. Their wicked practices would at length be made plain to the deluded themselves, as the wicked practices of Pharaoh's magicians were made plain, both to the Israelites and to the Egyptians, ver. 9.—Then to shew what he had done through divine grace for repressing error and wickedness in the world, and promoting holiness of

heart and life, the apostle appealed to Timothy's knowledge of his doctrine, manner of life, purpose in preaching, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions in various places, and deliverances. Wherefore Timothy, having been taught the true doctrines of the gospel by the apostle, and being animated by his example to encounter danger, was, under the grace of God, both qualified to detect, and strengthened to oppose error, ver. 10, 11.—Besides, he was to consider that all the faithful servants of Christ in the first age, were appointed to suffer persecution, ver. 12.—Whereas evil men and false teachers, instead of suffering for the truth, will give up every article thereof, and become more and more corrupt; seducing not only others, but themselves also, through their immoderate love of gain, ver. 13.—In short, the apostle ordered Timothy to maintain with firmness the doctrine which he had learned from him, knowing that he had learned it from an apostle of Christ, ver. 14.—and the rather that from his childhood he had been brought up in the knowledge of the Jewish scriptures; which, by leading him, under the divine blessing, to believe on Christ, were able to make him wise to salvation, ver. 15.—For these scriptures being given by the inspiration of God, they are in all respects agreeable to the gospel revelation, and may be used profitably by Christian ministers, in teaching, correcting, and instructing their people in righteousness, ver. 16.—Properly understood, therefore, the Jewish scriptures are of great use in fitting the Christian preacher for every part of his duty, ver. 17.

Ver. 1. This know also,] What follows is thought by some to contain part of the prophecy concerning the grand apostacy which was to happen in the latter times. If we keep our eye too closely upon the place, and consider what is here said alone, and without comparing it with what St. Paul had said and written to Timothy before, we shall perhaps doubt whether this refers to any other time than that in which the apostle wrote; or, at the furthest, to the time which was immediately to succeed. But if we enlarge our view, and take in the whole compass of what he has said about the great apostacy, and endeavour to put ourselves in the situation in which the apostle and the evangelist then were, we shall probably see things in a very different light: see 2 Theff. ii. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 1, &c. from a comparison of which places it will appear, that he is here prophesying of the same grand apostacy as was there foretold. Besides, he never says that this prophecy concerning the dreadful times which were to come, was then fulfilled; but on the contrary, ver. 13.—he shews that the *mystery of iniquity was then only beginning to work*, and that wicked men and impostors would grow still worse, deceiving others as well as themselves: and in Ch. iv. 3, 4. after he had bid Timothy use his utmost diligence, he intimates, that there was still a future time, when men would not endure sound doctrine; and charges Timothy to do what he could to prevent any steps toward that amazing scene of wickedness.

Ver. 3. Without natural affection] The word *Σταγν*, signifies

9¹ But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

10 But^m thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

11^o Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, ^o and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But^p evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But^q continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15^r And that from a child thou hast known

¹ Exod. 7. 12. & 8. 18. & 9. 11. Ch. 2. 10. Pf. 76. 10. ^m Or thou hast been a diligent follower of. Phil. 2. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 6, 12. & 6. 11, 12. Ch. 2. 22, 24, 25. ⁿ Acts, 13. 45, 50. & 14. 2, 5, 19, 20. ^a Cor. 6. 8—11. & 4. 8—12. 1 Cor. 4. 9—13. Job, 5. 18, 19. If. 41. 10, 14. & 43. 2. & 46. 3, 4. Pf. 34. 19. 2 Cor. 1. 10. ^o Mat. 16. 24. & 10. 17, 18. & 23. 34. John, 17. 14. & 16. 2, 3, 33. 1 Thess. 3. 3. with Rom. 8. 29. Luke, 24. 26. Acts, 14. 22. ^p 2 Pet. 2. 20. Ch. 2. 16. 1 Tim. 4. 1. 2 Thess. 2. 11. ^q Ch. 1. 13. 1 Tim. 6. 14. John, 15. 7. Ch. 2. 2—4. ^r Prov. 22. 6. Eccl. 12. 1. 2 Chr. 34. 3. 1 Kings, 18. 11. Ch. 1. 5. 1 Tim. 4. 6.

nifies that natural affection which even the brute creatures, as well as men, manifest, in cherishing, feeding, and taking care of their young ones; and the word *ασπογοι* signifies persons divested of that natural tenderness. The apostle does not mean that God would not implant such a principle in those apostates, as well as in other men; but that they would, by their cruelty and other wickedness, do all they could to root it out; or at least they would refuse to act as such a principle would dictate. The word *ασπροδοι*, rendered *truce-breakers*, signifies not only implacable, but treacherous persons; and may be applied to men, who, when once offended, will come to no treaty of reconciliation;—and also to those, who will not think themselves bound by such treaties, when they may accomplish any purposes of their own by a violation of them.

Ver. 4. *Traitors*] Betrayers of civil and sacred trusts, and delivering up even their nearest relations to miseries and death.

Ver. 6. *For of this sort are they, &c.*] Some begin this verse with the last clause of the preceding. The word rendered *creep*, *ειδουοντες*, signifies to *insinuate*, or *slide in*, like snakes. Some read *who dive into families*. This and the next verse contain a lively description of the practices of the monks and friars and other religious orders in the church of Rome, who creep into houses, and by auricular confession, and many other wicked arts, not only dive into the secrets of families, but, under the form and pretence of extraordinary sanctity, delude and corrupt their votaries.

Ver. 8. *As Jannes and Jambres*] Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned Exod. vii. nor any where else in the Old Testament; but their names are said to be mentioned, though with some variety as to the spelling, in both the Talmuds, and in the Targum of Jonathan on Exod. vii. 11. It is remarkable, that the former of them is mentioned together with Moses by Pliny, and both of them by Nume-nius the philosopher (quoted by Eusebius) as celebrated magicians. The Jews affirmed them to have been princes of Pharaoh's magicians, and greatly to have resisted Moses. See Plin. *Nat. Hist.* l. 30. c. 1. and Euseb. lib. ix. c. 8.

Ver. 9. *But they shall proceed no further, &c.*] "But I foresee, that they shall not proceed much farther in these

"artifices, for their folly shall be manifested to all; as theirs also was, when God sent upon the Egyptians plagues; which, far from being able to remove, or mitigate, they could not, as in former instances, so much as imitate."

Ver. 10. *But thou hast fully known*] Having in the preceding verses described the apostates of the last days, and shewn how much the wicked Judaizers made way for that apostacy, the apostle here, by way of opposition, proposes his own example and doctrine, that Timothy might observe and follow them: to incite him to which, he appeals to his many and great sufferings, as proofs of his sincerity; and he not only intimates that Timothy had been instructed by one who had sufficient attestations to his apostolic character, but that the true Christian revelation was agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament, with which Timothy had been acquainted from his infancy, and which might still be profitably read, if carefully compared with, and made subservient to the true Christian revelation. In this view the study of them would not lead him aside, as it did the Judaizers, but would help to make him a proper and perfect instructor of mankind in the Christian religion.

Ver. 12. *Yea, and all that will live godly, &c.*] This may import something peculiar to the godliness to be exercised by Christians, as being agreeable to the revelation of Christ, animated by his example, and dependant on his Spirit for assistance, and his atonement for acceptance with God:—important topics, upon which all who desire to obtain and promote godliness, ought to dwell much.

Ver. 13. *Seducers.*] The word *Γεντες* properly signifies *forcerers, magicians, jugglers, witches, or enchanters*. Jannes and Jambres were evidently such; impostors, who endeavoured to vend a false religion for a true one, and to support it by their incantations.

Ver. 14. *Knowing of whom thou hast learned,*] Meaning himself, but modestly declining to say so. Timothy was to continue in these things, because he knew of whom he had learned them,—namely, of a true apostle; and that they were agreeable to the scripture of the Old Testament, with which he had been acquainted from his infancy, through the instructions of his grandmother and mother, who were both Jewesses. See ch. i. 5.

Ver.

the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, * thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

¹ John, 5. 30. & 20. 31. Rom. 10. 17. & 15. 4. Pf. 119. 11. Col. 3. 16.

& 2. 11, 12. Pl. 119. 9, 11.

² 1 Tim. 6. 11. Ch. 2. 21. Luke, 16. 29, 31. Pf. 19. 7—11. & 119. 97—100.

³ 2 Pet. 1. 21, 19, 20. 2 Sam 23. 2. Rom. 5. 4. Tit. 1. 9, 11.

* Or *perfect*.

Ver. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.] The scriptures with which Timothy had been acquainted from his infancy were evidently those of the Old Testament; for none of the books of the New Testament were then committed to writing. The same thing seems plainly to be intended here by *all scripture*, which, in the preceding verse, is called *the sacred scripture*, and which St. Paul asserts to be divinely inspired. The Old Testament revelations were not final, but preparatory to the New Testament; and therefore the scriptures of the Old Testament are here represented as able to *make Timothy wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus*. There is, however, no reason to confine St. Paul's assertion, that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*, to the Old Testament. If in the Mosaic dispensation the written rule was *given by inspiration of God*, where the church was conducted in every step at first by divine oracular responses, and afterwards by a long series and continued succession of prophets; and all this under an *extraordinary* administration of Providence, such as might well seem to supersede the necessity of scriptural inspiration; how confidently may we conclude that the same divine goodness would give the *infallible guide* of an inspired scripture to the Christian church, where the *miraculous* influence of the Holy Spirit is supposed to have ceased with the apostolic ages? Nor can it be said, that what St. Paul predicates of *scripture*, must be confined to the *law*, and what is prefatory to it, since the largeness of his term, *all scripture*, extends to the whole canon of the Old Testament, as then received by the two churches. The canonical books of the Old Testament therefore being inspired, the reason of things directs us to expect the same quality in the New, if there were not a thousand unanswerable arguments besides. And as in the *Old*, among several occasional writings, there was the fundamental record, or the *great charter* of the Pentateuch; and in the volumes of the prophets, the oracular predictions of the future states of the church, to the *first* coming of the Messiah, and so indeed more obscurely to the *second* coming; so in the *New*, there is, besides the occasional Epistles, the authentic record or *great charter* of the Gospel-covenant; and in the Revelations of St. John, the same divine predictions continued, and more fully predicted, to the *second* coming of the Saviour of the world. We may therefore venture to say, that the general proposition which affirms that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*, necessarily includes the scriptures in question; what it predicates of *all scripture*, taking in the *New* as well as the *Old*; as well that which was to be written, as that which was already collected into a canon. For the term *scripture*, as the context leads us to understand it, is general, and means a religious rule, perfect in its di-

rection for the conduct of human life in belief and practice, it being under this idea that St. Paul recommends the scripture to Timothy. The assertion therefore is universal, and amounts to this, "That *divine inspiration* is an essential quality of every *scripture*, which constitutes the *law* or rule of a religion coming from God." On the whole then we conclude, that *all the scriptures of the New Testament were given by the inspiration of God*; and accordingly these scriptures are fitted for *doctrine*, as laying down the most fundamental doctrines and rules of religion, and every necessary truth; for *reproof or conviction*, as guarding us from all pernicious errors, and shewing us the turpitude of vice; for *correction*, as affording the strongest arguments under the grace of God for amendment; and for *instruction in righteousness*, as not only recommending holiness of heart and life in general, but likewise exciting us to a continual progress in holy and virtuous habits.

Ver. 17. That the man of God may be perfect.] "That the furniture of the man of God may be complete, and that he may be thoroughly fitted for every good work which his holy calling may require."

Inferences.—Must we not, on the survey of this chapter, in comparison with what we every day behold in life, cry out, "*Verily, these are the last days?*" They are assuredly times of *difficulty* and *peril*. *Self-love, pride, ingratitude, treachery, intemperance, insolence, the contempt of all authority*, human and divine, each, all of these characters may too plainly declare it: but none with more striking evidence than the *excessive love of pleasure*, on which so many are doting to destruction, while every consideration, both of religion and of prudence, falls at the shrine of this favourite idol. Men are *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, more than lovers of *their families*, yea, though self-interest be in many instances so scandalously pursued, yet more than lovers of *themselves*; and when they have sacrificed every thing else to their *gain*, they sacrifice even that *gain to luxury*. And would to God there were none such, even among those that retain *the form of godliness*, which so many indeed have scornfully cast off! But O! how vain the *form*, where the *power of it is thus denied!* And how peculiarly scandalous are these characters in those who call themselves *teachers of religion!* Yet to such they are here originally applied; and their race is not yet extinct.

Blessed be God, there are those yet remaining who are the happy reverse of these; ministers, who can appeal to the consciences of men, as to their *doctrine*, their *conversation*, their *resolution*, their *fidelity*, their *gentleness*, their *charity*, and their *patience*. Happy are they, how ill soever they may be treated in the world! Happy would they be, though exposed to all the terrors of *persecution* which the

apostles

CHAP. IV.

St. Paul exhorteth Timothy to do his duty with all care and diligence: he certifieth him of the nearness of his death; willeth him to come speedily unto him, and to bring Marcus with him, and certain things which he wrote for; warneth him to beware of Alexander the smith; informeth him what had befallen at his first answering; and soon after concludeth.

[Anno Domini 67.]

I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall

judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 ° Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; ° reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 ° And they shall turn away *their ears*

^a 2 Thess. 2. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 21. & 6. 13. Ch. 2. 14. ^b Acts, 10. 42. & 17. 31. John, 5. 22. Rev. 20. 11, 12. Mat. 25. 31—46. Rom. 14. 9—12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 7—10. Heb. 9. 28. ^c Luke, 14. 23. Mat. 8. 1. Prov. 25. 11. Acts, 20. 7. 1 Tim. 5. 20. Tit. 2. 15. & 1. 5, 11, 13. Ch. 2. 24, 25. & 3. 10, 16. Col. 1. 28, 29. Acts, 20. 20, 21, 27, 31. ^d See 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. Ch. 3. 1—6. 1 Kings, 22. 8. If. 30. 10. Amos, 7. 12, 13. Mic. 2. 11. Ch. 2. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 3—5, 20. Rom. 2. 5. ^e 1 Tim. 1. 4, 5, 7. & 4. 7. & 6. 20. Tit. 1. 10, 14. with 2 Pet. 1. 16.

apostles and their first followers endured! but we are all warned to *prepare for* some degree of it; and indeed who can wonder if, amid so many evils, they who will not go on with the multitude, should sometimes be rudely pressed by them; and it may be, in some instances, cast down and trampled under foot. But be it so; *though cast down, they shall not be destroyed.* (2 Cor. iv. 9.) A little time will balance all. An hour of eternity will *more* than balance it. Let us guard against the *deceits* by which so many suffer. Let us guard, above all, against those deceits which men practise upon themselves, and whereby they hurt themselves infinitely more than all their fraud or violence can hurt any who are not accessory to their own undoing.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle apprizes Timothy of the dangerous days which were hastening on. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come,* when sad corruptions, creeping into the church, shall make it difficult to preserve a pure conscience. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves,* wholly devoted to the pursuits of their worldly honour and interests; *covetous,* insatiate after filthy lucre; *proud,* and vain-glorious *boasters;* *blasphemers* of God and man; *disobedient to parents;* *unthankful* to their benefactors; *unholy* in heart and conversation; *without natural affection,* which appears even in brutes; *truce breakers,* perfidious to the most solemn engagements; *false accusers,* like devils incarnate, blackening, with every opprobrious calumny, their opponents; *incontinent,* indulging every bestial appetite; *fierce* and furious in their tempers; *despisers of those that are good,* and treating men, far their betters, with contempt; *traitors,* false to their trusts, betraying their nearest friends; *heady,* driving furiously in their wicked courses, impatient of controul; *high minded,* puffed up with a vain conceit of their own superiority; *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;* and what is the aggravation of all their other abominations, making great pretensions to piety, *having a form of godliness,* and affecting rigid attachment to the externals of worship, *but denying the power thereof,* real enemies to vital religion: *from such turn away,* and shun them as the plague.

These corruptions began in the Gnosticks, who in the apostle's days appeared; and the perilous times advanced to their height, when the Roman pontiffs, after a train of

diabolical practices, raised their blasphemous hierarchy, and consecrated their abominations. And to the papal apostacy are all these characters strikingly applicable.

2dly, The apostle proceeds,

1. To point out the artful and pernicious practices of the seducers. *For of this sort are they which creep into houses,* with every wheedling art, *and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,* imposing upon them with flattering speeches, and gaining them to their party, *ever learning* of these vain teachers, *and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,* but bewildered in the endless mazes of error. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses,* setting up their pretended miracles in opposition to his divine commission, *so do these also resist the truth* of the gospel—*men of like corrupt minds* as these Egyptian forcerers, *reprobate concerning the faith,* rejected and abhorred of God.

2. He foretells that all their efforts should be impotent. *But they shall proceed no further* than the magicians did, nor be able essentially and finally to deceive the faithful saints of God; for an effectual check shall be given to them, and *their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was;* and all their lying miracles shall be detected. *Note;* Error may, for a time, prevail; but truth shall finally be triumphant.

3dly, Nothing could better serve to guard Timothy against these seducers, than the striking contrast between their conduct and that of the blessed Paul.

1. He reminds him of what he had seen. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine,* and the uniform tenor of my preaching; *my exemplary manner of life,* steady purpose to advance God's glory and the good of men's souls, unshaken faith, fervent charity, unwearied patience amid the many and grievous persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: *what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.* With such an example Timothy should be animated to fidelity, and might surely expect the same supports and deliverances.

2. He informs him that suffering must be more or less every Christian's lot, and especially in those times. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,* of one kind or other, from mockery to martyrdom. There is indeed a godliness in form that the world speaks

from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist,

^a 1 Theff. 5. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Acts, 20. 28. 1 Tim. 4. 16. Heb. 13. 17. ^b Ch. 1. 8. & 2. 3, 10. & 3. 10—12. ^c Acts, 21. 8. Eph. 4. 11.

well of; but to be *godly in Christ Jesus*, in spirit and temper conformed to him, will ever render us abhorred of a world that lieth in wickedness.

3. He predicts the fatal end of these deceivers. *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse*, hurried on from one excess of wickedness to another, *deceiving and being deceived*, till, having filled up the measure of their iniquities, they perish with the arch-deceiver in everlasting burnings.

4thly, As he would be exposed to great temptations, the apostle exhorts him to cleave to the Scriptures, as the only infallible guide to truth.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, the pure and unadulterated doctrines of the gospel, which on the most satisfying evidence thou hast believed, *knowing of whom thou hast learned them*, even from me, divinely commissioned from the great Redeemer: *and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures*, early initiated in these sacred records, *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus*, who is the sum and substance of the whole, and to whom both the law and the prophets bear witness. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*, both the Old and New Testament have the same divine original; *and is profitable for doctrine*, no doctrine demanding our credence and submission, but what can be clearly proved from thence; *for reproof of errors, heresies, and all manner of evil; for correction of whatever is found amiss in the church; for instruction in righteousness*, how holiness can be obtained, and how we can be enabled so to walk as to please God: *that the man of God, the true believer, may be perfect, thoroughly instructed in all the mind of God, and furnished unto all good works*, whether as a Christian for those of his station, or as a minister for the arduous service in which he is engaged. *Note*; (1.) Parents should betimes endeavour to lead their children to the Bible. (2.) All the volumes of mere human learning can never teach us so much wisdom as one page, one line of the book of God; after all these labours we must have been left to perish in ignorance; but in the oracles of truth, life and immortality are brought to light, and the poorest and most unlettered saint of God is wiser, in the things which make for his everlasting peace, than the deepest metaphysician, or the most profound philosopher. (3.) All scripture is of divine authority, therefore on God's testimony to be received with faith. Our wisdom, where any thing mysterious is revealed, is, not to reason, but to believe. (4.) The book of God is the Christian's great magazine; he can be in no state and condition, but he will there find direction, instruction, reproof, or comfort, exactly suited to his circumstances.

CHAP. IV.

Having in the preceding chapter explained to Timothy the duties of his office as an evangelist, the apostle now solemnly charged him in the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead at

his second coming, to be diligent and faithful in all the duties of his ministry, by preaching true doctrine, confuting gainsayers, rebuking sinners, and exhorting both the teachers and the people under his care, to behave properly in every respect, ver. 1, 2.—because the time was approaching in which the people would not endure wholesome doctrine; but having itching ears which required to be tickled with the elegancies of language, would for that purpose multiply to themselves teachers, ver. 3.—and would listen to fables, loathing the solid doctrine of the gospel, ver. 4.—Next, he exhorted Timothy to watch at all times to oppose the entrance of false doctrine and corrupt practices, without being intimidated by the evils to which he might expose himself by his fidelity; and to do the work of an evangelist in such a manner as to shew himself an approved minister of Christ, ver. 5.—Then he told him, that he was thus earnest in his exhortations to him, because the time of his departure was very near, ver. 6.—and because he himself had combated the good combat, had finished the race, and had all along preserved the faith pure, ver. 7.—and was to be rewarded as a conqueror in the good combat, with a crown of righteousness by Christ the righteous Judge of the world; so that if Timothy proved equally courageous and faithful in discharging the duties of his ministry, he might also, through the rich and free grace of God, expect the same reward from Christ, who will bestow a crown of righteousness on all who, living in humility and obedience, long for his appearing to judge the world, ver. 8.

In the remaining part of the chapter, the apostle gave Timothy a particular account of his own affairs, and of the behaviour both of his friends and enemies, ver. 9—18. then desired him to salute Prisca and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus, ver. 19.—And because he had left Erastus at Corinth, and Trophimus at Miletus, and almost all his assistants had fled from the city, he begged him to come to Rome before winter. Then he gave him the salutations of Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, Christians of singular eminence, and the salutations of all the brethren in Rome with whom he was allowed to have any intercourse, ver. 20, 21.—and concluded with giving him, and the brethren at Ephesus, his apostolical benediction, ver. 22.

Ver. 2. In season, out of season;] That is, “in the stated season of religious assemblies; and out of that season, whenever occasional Providences may give thee an opportunity: yea, carry it into thy private conversation, in the intervals of private labour.”

Ver. 3. For the time will come] This is another hint of the introduction of the grand apostacy, and it has been verified to an amazing degree. That is *sound doctrine* which promotes a holy life: it is the love of sin which renders men averse *to sound doctrine*, and puts them upon following such teachers as will gratify their humours and inclinations, and please their ears and fancies, without attacking or condemning their false opinions, or corrupt practices.

make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ^k ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 ^l I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith :

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me ^m a crown of righteousness, which the Lord ⁿ the righteous Judge shall give me at that day : and

not to me only, but unto all them also that ^o love his appearing.

9 ^p Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me :
10 For ^q Demas ^r hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica ; Crescens to Galatia, ^s Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only ^t Luke is with me. Take Mark,

^l Or fulfil. Col. 1. 25. & 4. 17. Rom. 15. 19. ^k Phil. 1. 23. & 2. 17. 2 Pet. 1. 14. 1 Sam. 20. 3. ^m 1 Tim. 6. 12. 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25. Phil. 3. 14. Heb. 12. 1, 2. Rev. 2. 10, 11. John, 17. 4. & 19. 30. ⁿ 1 Cor. 9. 25. Jam. 1. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 4. Rev. 2. 10. Heb. 6. 10. ^o 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. Gen. 18. 25. ^p Rom. 8. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 13. Heb. 9. 28. ^q Ch. 1. 4. Ver. 21. ^r Col. 4. 14. Philem. 24. ^s Ver. 16. Ch. 1. 15. Phil. 2. 21. 1 Tim. 6. 10. ^t Gal. 2. 1, 3. 2 Cor. 2. 13. Tit. 1. 4. Acts, 16. 10. Col. 4. 14. Philem. 24. Luke, 1. 3. Ad. 1. 1. & 12. 12, 25. & 13. 5, 13. & 15. 37—39. Col. 4. 10. Philem. 23. 1 Pet. 5. 13.

practices. Instead of *shall*, here and in the next verse, it is best to read *will*.

Ver. 5. *Endure afflictions,*] The heathens ascribed the patience and steadfastness of the Christians, in the midst of persecution, to mere obstinacy ; but none of mankind ever had stronger reasons for what they did, or better principles to go upon, when they encountered danger and death with such fortitude and intrepidity of mind. Instead of *make full proof of thy ministry*, some would read *accomplish*, or *fill up* all the branches of *thy ministry*.

Ver. 6. *I am—ready to be offered,*] The original is very emphatical : *For I am already poured out as a libation*. So St. Peter foresaw his approaching martyrdom, 2 Ep. i. 14. St. Paul uses the word *σπένδομαι* in the same sense, Philip. ii. 17. It seems to be an allusion to the custom of pouring wine upon the head of the victim, just before it was offered up to God ; and that wine so poured out was usually called a *libation*. The apostle here intimates, that his blood was as it were already like one of those libations, which, when it was poured out, could not be gathered up again. Thus he speaks of his approaching martyrdom as of a thing sure and already done, and past recalling ; intimating that it would certainly happen, whenever he should come to make his *second apology*. His ministry was a sacrifice ; and when the wine was poured out, the sacrifice was finished. In this manner he hints that his ministry was just come to an end, and he could no more assist Timothy in spreading and supporting the true gospel of Christ.

Ver. 7. *I have fought a good fight, &c.*] *I have maintained the good combat, I have finished my race, &c.* The apostle here again alludes to the *agonistic games*. See 1 Tim. vi. 12. Two of the expressions in this verse are *agonistic terms*, and the third is perhaps an allusion to the citizen who was faithful as a magistrate, or in any public station, upon whom the Greeks used to bestow a crown for his *fidelity* and public usefulness. Unless this be admitted, the apostle starts from his figurative and beautiful representation in that expression, *I have kept the faith* ; to which nevertheless he returns in the next verse, and carries it on throughout : but if this sense be admitted, the 8th verse follows with obvious and great propriety ; for then the apostle does in effect say, that he expected, through divine grace, a crown upon both accounts, as a *victor* in the *agonistic games*, and as a *citizen* who had been faithful in a public station, and eminently useful to mankind.

Ver. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown, &c.*] St. Paul here represents the great Judge, who had been witness to all his behaviour, with a crown in his hand, which he will bestow upon him as the reward of his faithfulness, and of his coming off victor : and that the time of his bestowing it will be *in that day* ; that is, the great day of judgment ; when he will reward all the faithful and victorious ; for so the phrase *that day* generally signifies throughout the New Testament. See 1 Thess. iv. 14.

Ver. 9.] After Timothy had settled affairs where he was, the apostle orders him to repair to him with all speed ; for all his other companions, except Luke, were gone away from him. Timothy was to make Troas in his way to Rome, and to receive from Carpus several things which the apostle had left behind him ; and he was to beware of *Alexander*, as one of the most dangerous Judaizers, ver. 9 —15. He then acquaints Timothy, that he had made *one apology*, probably before Nero, or his prefect, and was in prospect of a second : that when he made his first apology all his companions had forsaken him ; notwithstanding which, he undauntedly made known what he had so long preached, and escaped with his life for that time, though he did not expect to escape when he should be called to make another apology. However, he was persuaded that he should do nothing unbecoming his character, ver. 16 —18.

Ver. 10. *Having loved this present world,*] If we consider St. Paul's present situation, we shall be inclined to believe that *Demas* was influenced to this conduct by a *love to the present life*, or *world*, not to any principles of the *Judaizers* ; by a dread of persecution, and the fear of a violent death —such as the apostle himself was in danger of, and such as he shortly after actually suffered. So imminent was the danger of standing by the apostle, or appearing with or for him, that when he made his first apology, all the Christians forsook him : about that time it was that *Demas*, out of a sense of the impending danger, or an excessive love of this present life, or from an unwillingness to die a martyr with the apostle, left Rome, and went to *Thessalonica*, where he might be out of danger, when the apostle thought he should have gone elsewhere ; or rather, perhaps, have stayed, and run all hazards with him, in defence of the glorious gospel of Christ.

Ver. 11. *Take Mark, and bring him with thee :*] This is a proof that St. Paul and St. Mark were reconciled again, though the behaviour of the latter had formerly occasioned

and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And ^a Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpūs, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially * the parchments.

14 ^x Alexander the copper-smith did me

much evil: the Lord ⁷ reward him according to his works:

15 ^z Of whom be thou aware also; for he hath greatly withstood † our words.

16 At my first answer ^a no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: ^b I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

^a Acts, 20. 4. Eph. 6. 21. Col. 4. 7. Tit. 3. 12. * Perhaps original copies of his epistles. ^x 1 Tim. 1. 20. Acts, 19. 33, 34. ⁷ 2 Sam. 3. 39. Pf. 28. 4. Rev. 18. 6. 1f. 3. 11. ^z Mat. 10. 16, 17. & 7. 15. Phil. 3. 2. † Or our preachings. ^a Ver. 10. Ch. 1. 15. Mat. 26. 56. Jer. 9. 3. Pf. 14. 2, 4. ^b Luke, 23. 34. Acts, 7. 60.

their separation: Acts xv. 39. The great value which St. Paul retained for St. Mark, even till the last, is here expressed in clear and strong terms; for this was written not long before the apostle's martyrdom, when almost all his companions had forsaken him; and yet he speaks most affectionately of St. Mark, as one who would not desert him, but be peculiarly serviceable to him in his present situation, and greatly promote the gospel.

Ver. 13. *The cloke that I left at Troas, &c.*] Τὸν Φαιβέον. This word is variously spelt, and has various meanings. Gataker looks upon it to be a Latin word Græcised. Some understand it to signify a bag, or book-case; and the joining books and parchments with it, say they, makes it probable that this was the sense in which St. Paul here used it: and, in confirmation hereof, it is observed that the Syriac, which is accounted one of the most ancient versions, has rendered the word a house, or repository for writings; meaning, that it is either a box, bag, or portmanteau, wherein books and writings were deposited. Chrysostom, however, Cæcumenius, and others, interpret it ενδυμα, a garment; "And this," says Parkhurst, seems the most probable sense of the word, because the apostle, in the same sentence, distinctly mentions both his books and parchments. Hesychius remarks that the word φελλωνος, or φελλωνος, is a Cretan word, signifying a waistcoat, or under-garment; and it seems ultimately deducible from the Hebrew פלה, *peleh*, to sever, or separate our bodies; namely, from the surrounding air; whence also the Greek φελος, "the bark of a tree, for a like reason." The word Βιβλια, rendered books, is a diminutive, and may denote lesser books. The word Μικράνας, is a Latin word, and signifies, as we have rendered it, parchment, or vellum, which is said to have been invented at Pergamos; whence it is called in Latin Pergamenum: and hence the French name *parchemin*, and our English parchment. The books of the ancients were of two forms; one sort they rolled up, and called *volumina*, volumes, à *volvendo*, from their being rolled up: these were usually, perhaps, of parchment; the other sort do not appear to have been rolled up; and were probably made of the papyrus, or great Egyptian rush. See the *Inferences*.

Ver. 14. *Alexander the copper-smith, &c.*] Dr. Lightfoot observes, that *delivering a person over to Satan*, was a phrase well known among the Jews; and that it meant more than excommunication, even the delivering men over by miracle to diseases or death. The apostle, some years before this, had delivered over Alexander unto Satan; 1 Tim. i. 20. But the punishment so inflicted had not reclaimed him;

and if Alexander was incorrigible, the apostle might justly denounce some greater curse upon him, or rather foretel his future and final punishment. Theophylact says, "That the word ἀποδοῦν, is put for the word ἀποδοῦναι; for it is rather a prophecy, than an imprecation." But whether this be considered as a prediction or a petition, there is not in it the least degree of revenge: for the apostle leaves it to the great Searcher of Hearts, to determine what Alexander's works had been, and what the principle was from which they had proceeded; and then he foretells, or petitions, that God would reward him, according as God himself knew his works had been: which was really no other than foretelling, that the God and Judge of the earth will do right, or praying him to do so. See on the next verse.

Ver. 16. *At my first answer, &c.*] *Apology, or defence.* Heylin, Doddridge, &c. Upon our Lord's being apprehended, all his disciples forsook him and fled;—and yet he forgave, and interceded for them. When St. Paul became a Christian, he put off his fierce and persecuting spirit; and after that, the charitable and benign spirit of our Lord manifested itself in him to the very last;—as appears among other instances from the benevolent prayer in this verse; which, it is remarkable, was the very prayer of the dying Stephen, Acts, vii. 60. We may also further observe, that this apostle had, upon some occasions at least, the gift of discerning the spirits of men; and could perhaps thereby know, that what Alexander did, was out of malice; but that what his companions had done, was out of fear of suffering, rather than aversion to the truth. He therefore speaks very differently of them. But this will not warrant any man, who is destitute of apostolic authority, and of the gift of discerning spirits, to denounce or foretel the like evil to any man whatever. Many circumstances make it extraordinary that St. Paul should have been deserted by the Christians at Rome in this extremity: when he wrote his epistle to the church there,—which must have been ten years before this,—he speaks of their faith as celebrated through the world: he salutes a vast number of illustrious persons by name, and mentions many of them as his particular friends; and we may be assured, that during the two years he spent there, in his own hired house, the number, and probably the zeal, of the Christian converts would be greatly increased. See Philip. i. 12—14. iv. 22. We are ready then to say, How was it possible that he should be thus forsaken?—But there is a material circumstance, seldom taken notice of in this connection, which accounts in a great measure for what might otherwise

17 ^c Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; ^d that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and ^e I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 ^f And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and ^g will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: ^h to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute ⁱ Prisca, and Aquila, and ^k the household of Onesiphorus.

20 ^l Erastus abode at Corinth: but ^m Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick

21 ⁿ Do thy diligence to come before winter. ^o Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 ^p The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

^c Pl. 109. 31. If. 41. 10, 14, 15. & 43. 2. & 46. 4. Mat. 10. 19. Acts, 23. 11. & 27. 23, 24. Ch. 1. 7. ^d Phil. 1. 12—14. Col. 1. 25, 26. Rom. 16. 25, 26. ^e Pl. 22. 23. If. 49. 25, 26. ^f 1 Sam. 17. 37. ^g 1 Cor. 1. 10. 2 Pet. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 10. 13. ^h 1 Pet. 1. 5—7. Jude, 1. Pl. xci. & 73. 24. ⁱ Rom. 9. 5. & 16. 27. 1 Tim. 6. 16. & 1. 17. ^j Acts, 18. 2, 26. Rom. 16. 7. ^k Ch. 1. 16—18. ^l Acts, 19. 21. Rom. 16. 23. ^m Acts, 20. 4. & 21. 29. ⁿ Ch. 1. 4. Ver. 9. ^o 1 Cor. 16. 20. 2 Cor. 13. 13. Phil. 4. 21, 22. Col. 4. 14. ^p Gal. 6. 18. 1 item. 25. see 1 Tim. 6. 21.

wife appear so strange. Clement, the companion of St. Paul, informs us, that he suffered martyrdom *under the governors*; that is to say, when Nero was gone into Greece, and had left the government of the city to *Tigellinus* and *Sabinus*, præfects of the prætorian guard, and that monster *Helius Casarianus*. If this be allowed, it fixes the death of St. Paul to the year 66 or 67. But the cruel persecution which Nero had raised against the Christians at Rome, was at least two years before this. It is possible, therefore, that many of the excellent persons referred to above, might have suffered death for their religion; or, according to our Lord's advice, Matth. x. 23. have retired to a distance from Rome. The *Asiatic* Christians, who came with St. Paul, acted a most mean part in deserting him, as the other Christians of the place did.

Ver. 17. *Might be fully known,*] Πληροφόρηθῆναι,—*might be carried on with confidence.* It was a glorious testimony to the honour of Christianity, that the apostle could thus courageously maintain it, when all his friends forsook him, and his enemies were so fiercely raging against him. By the *lion*, the apostle (according to many commentators) means the emperor Nero; whom, it is remarkable, Seneca calls by the same name. But, since Clement says that he suffered martyrdom under the governors, (see on ver. 16.) some think it more probable, that by the *lion* the apostle intended *Helius*; who was, if possible, more savage than his master, and whom Nero had at this time left with an absolute authority in Rome during his absence in Greece. The sacred Scriptures frequently represent idolatrous, bigotted, and cruel princes, under this image. Comp. Amos, v. 19. Jer. ii. 30. Joel, i. 6. Nahum, ii. 12. The apostle may allude here to the circumstance in Dan. vi. 22. See Pl. xxxv. 17.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord shall deliver me*] “I do not indeed expect to be delivered, when I am called upon to make my second apology: but I am persuaded that the Lord will deliver me from every evil work; from all misbehaviour unworthy his sacred ministry; and that he will bring me safe unto his heavenly kingdom.”

Ver. 19. *Salute Prisca, and Aquila,*] She is called *Priscilla*, Acts, xviii. 2. 26. Rom. xvi. 3.

Ver. 20. *Trophimus—left at Miletum sick.*] It has been very justly argued from this text, that a power of working miracles did not *always* reside in the apostles; and indeed

if it had, one can hardly imagine that any good or useful man would have been sick, and have died under their notice, which would have been quite inconsistent with the scheme of Divine Providence. Timothy's frequent infirmities afford a farther argument to the same purpose. But such good men as these, did not need the miraculous cure of their own distempers, to confirm their faith in the gospel.

Ver. 21. *Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia,*] What some have said concerning *Pudens's* being of the senatorial order, and *Claudia's* being a British lady who was converted by St. Paul, and sent the gospel first into England, does not seem sufficiently supported. Martial speaks of them as young persons at that time, lib. iv. epigr. 13. *Linus* is said by the ancients to have been afterwards the first bishop of Rome. When the apostle says, ver. 11. that *Luke only was with him*, he must be understood to speak of his companions and fellow-labourers in the gospel: for here is an intimation that there were Christian brethren still at Rome, and that the whole church there was not entirely dispersed and broken up. And when he says, ver. 16. that at his first apology they all forsook him, we are not to suppose that all the Christians then left the city, but that none of them stood by him, or appeared with him before the præfect.

Inferences drawn from ver. 13. The sacred writings, being penned by holy persons, immediately inspired by the Divine Spirit in what they wrote, have nothing in them frivolous or useless; nothing but what may yield us profitable matter of instruction, if rightly understood: so that the seemingly very little things in them are many times, upon farther search and consideration, found to be of no little use.

Such is the portion of scripture now before us; whence we may naturally deduce the following observations, no less pleasing perhaps than edifying to the attentive reader.

1. And first we may remark the poverty and mean estate of the apostle St. Paul. “Behold, (says Erasmus on the “place,) behold the apostle's goods and moveables;—a “poor cloak to keep him from the weather, and a few “books;” hence he himself often takes notice of his own poverty, as 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12. Acts, xx. 34. and in various other places. This was a singular design of Divine Providence

dence toward the apostles in general, who were all of them kept in a poor and mean, yea, in a most afflicted and miserable condition, as St. Paul observes, 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. hereby fully to convince the world of their sincerity in preaching the gospel, that they sought not themselves, or their own ease or advantage; but were content, for the propagation of the sacred ministry, to endure the greatest extremities; and that their only aim was the advancement of that truth, which with so great a loss and hazard to themselves they constantly published to the world.

2. From the passage in question we may observe, secondly, “that even the infallibly inspired ministers of God did not so wholly depend upon divine inspiration, but that they made use also of the ordinary helps and means, — such as reading of books, with study and meditation — on them, for their assistance in the discharge of their office.”

St. Paul, the pupil of Gamaliel, had his *books*, which he had read, and his *parchments*—his peculiar *manuscripts* too,—his collections of notes, most probably,—which he found to be useful to him; and therefore gives Timothy a special charge to convey them safely to him. Nay, and he elsewhere exhorts this his son Timothy to the same course of reading and study: *Till I come, says he, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine: neglect not the gift that is in thee, &c.—meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* 1 Tim. iv. 3—15. Whence it is very remarkable, (1.) That the exhortation is to Timothy;—a man placed by the apostle as bishop at Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia Minor;—a man especially beloved of the great apostle;—a man marked out long before by *prophecy* as one who would prove a very eminent and excellent person; (1 Tim. i. 18.)—nay more,—a man endowed with extraordinary *gifts* and abilities, conferred on him in his ordination. *This man* St. Paul exhorts to *reading and meditation*, for the better discharge of his office. (2.) The order of the apostle’s admonition is observable: *Give attendance to reading, &c.—to reading, before exhortation or doctrine*: he is advised to be himself first a well-read divine, that he might be the better able to instruct others. (3.) The emphatical words used by the apostle are very striking; he advises Timothy not only to *read* and *study*, that he might be able to *exhort* and *teach* with effect, but presses him to give *attendance* to reading;—not to *neglect* the supernatural *gift* bestowed on him; to *meditate* on what he read and learned, and to *give himself wholly* to these things. All which phrases plainly signify the greatest industry and diligence to be used by him in reading and study, and the other exercises there mentioned.

The same thing is evidently intended by our apostle, 2 Tim. i. 6. where he admonishes Timothy to *stir up the gift of God within him*;—to *rekindle* and *cherish* that divine fire by prayer, reading, meditation, &c. which would be answered by a further supply of divine fuel,—of the Holy Ghost and of fire.

And thus the *gifts of God* in men,—even the *extraordinary gifts*, such as Timothy had, demand, in the order of God, the improvement of every means provided of God in his providence, particularly diligent reading, study, and prayer; and (we may add) a charitable use and exercise of those gifts for the good of others.

This is sufficient to shew us the practice of the divinely inspired persons under the *New Testament*; and we may

further remark; that the holy prophets under the *Old Testament* took the same course, not depending so wholly upon immediate revelation and inspiration from God, as to think all endeavour on their own part needless; for we read of schools and societies, consisting of prophets and their *sons*, scholars, and disciples, the one receiving instructions from the other. See 1 Sam. x. 10. xix. 20. 2 Kings, ii. 3. 7. 15. iv. 38. and compare Deut. xxxiii. 3. with Acts, xxii. 3.

3. These considerations may amply serve to expose *their* folly, who renounce all books and book-learning, as needless and of no use to them, and bid defiance to study and reading. Such would do well to consider, that the Spirit of God never was given to the slothful or lazy. The divine assistance and human industry always went together hand in hand; and the doctrine that aims to separate and divide them, merits the severest censure.

4. Hence likewise all ministers of the gospel may learn their duty,—diligently to read and study the *holy scriptures* in the first place, and next to them the books of learned and good men, who have exerted their abilities in explaining them; and whatever other books they can procure, that may be in any way useful to them in their ministry. The learned and judicious Estius has a note upon the text in question very applicable to this purpose: “Let bishops and elders (says he,) learn from hence, what great need they have of continual reading and study, how great soever their proficiency may already be; seeing St. Paul, who had been taught the mysteries of religion by our Lord Christ himself, and had now for a long time exercised the office of an apostle, had still occasion to make use of books.”—And indeed, when we consider how strict a charge he here gives Timothy, and that the inspired prophets under the Old Testament thought the same exercises necessary for themselves, how can we venture (weak and feeble, the best of us, compared with them) either through *pride* to scorn and reject, or out of sloth and indolence to wave and neglect, those helps? Let us therefore give *all attention* to reading and study, and add to ourselves assiduously to these exercises, with daily prayer to God for his blessing on them, that our proficiency may appear unto all men, to his glory and the general good.

Lastly, This may serve also to instruct lay Christians of every rank in *their duty*, diligently to consult the sacred scriptures, and those other good works with which the providence of God has furnished them, in order to their instruction in matters of religion. It is the peculiar happiness of our nation to be amply supplied with these helps to divine knowledge: and if the prophets of old, if the ministers of Christ,—nay, if the apostles themselves have thought reading and study useful to them, can any serious private Christian conceive that he has no need at all of it? It is true, more time and pains in those exercises are required of the *ministers* of religion than of others; but none are exempted and excused from the duty, because all men are bound by every means, in dependance upon the grace and blessing of God, to be wise unto salvation. *Ministers* are to read, that they may be able to teach; and the *people* are to read, that they may be capable of learning, or being taught; for unless there be a concurrent industry in the teacher and the disciple, the one teacheth in vain, because the other will never learn.

It becomes the part therefore of every good man daily

to read the holy scriptures, and those other good books which he has, or can procure, that may help him to understand the volumes of truth; and if any cannot read himself, to get some relation, friend, or neighbour to read to him; and they must be very uncharitable indeed, who will deny that assistance. They who cannot read, are concerned to double their diligence in hearing; in a more careful attendance on all the means and opportunities of instruction that shall be offered them in public; and in asking and seeking after instruction from their ministers in private; adding their daily and most earnest prayers to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit in the use of those means, and encouraging themselves with that divine promise, James, i. 5. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle, being now ready to conclude his epistle, gives Timothy,

1. His solemn charge. *I charge thee before the great heart-searching God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, in the last great day, when he shall come in his glory, and give to every man according to his works; preach the word, proclaiming, as a herald aloud, the blessed gospel; be instant in season, and, as some may think, out of season; earnest to inculcate the truth upon men's consciences, both on the Lord's day, and every other opportunity, not only in time of peace, but amidst all opposition and perfection; reprove, reuke gainfayers, backsliders, sinners; exhort and encourage the faithful, with all long suffering, unwearied in the service, not discouraged at any difficulties in the way, and with that doctrine, which is according to the scriptures, and profitable for the souls of men.* Note; (1.) Ministers must not only preach, but be instant; frozen discourses, languidly delivered, will never fire the hearer's soul. (2.) They who have the work of Christ at heart, will be perhaps often thought very unseasonable in the frequency of their public ministrations, or the freedom of their private rebukes; but they have here a divine warrant.

2. He warns him how difficult it will prove to be faithful amid the abounding errors. *For the time will come, and the mystery of iniquity already begins to operate, when they will not endure sound doctrine, the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, but after their own depraved lusts and passions, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, desiring to have their fancies entertained, and their corruptions flattered, instead of the free, honest, and faithful rebukes which the true gospel ministers deliver. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, averse from it, and refusing to obey it, and shall be turned unto fables, listening to the seducing teachers, who with idle tales amuse, and with falsehoods lull their consciences asleep.* Note; They who like to be flattered in their sins, rather than to hear faithful reproof, are given up to their own delusions; and the blind are then suffered to follow the blind, till both fall into the pit of hell.

3. He admonishes Timothy to guard against these deceivers, and to caution the people that they be not imposed upon. *But watch thou in all things, over thy own*

heart, and over the church committed to thy care, guarding against the first appearances of evil and error; endure afflictions with fortitude and patience: *do the work of an evangelist with all fidelity and zeal; make full proof of thy ministry, that gainfayers may be silenced, and believers comforted and edified.*

4. He informs Timothy of his approaching dissolution and glorious hope, for his encouragement to follow his steps. *For I am now ready to be offered up, and to pour out my blood as a libation in the service of the gospel; and the time of my departure is at hand, when my disembodied soul shall go to the bosom of my Lord. I have fought a good fight, and through grace can look back with satisfaction on my warfare; I have finished my course, and am near the glorious prize; I have kept the faith, maintaining the purity of the doctrines of Christ, and adorning them by unimpeached fidelity in my own conversation. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, the rewarder of all his faithful saints, shall give me at that day of his appearing and glory; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, and live under its influence, and in the prospect and earnest expectation of it.* Note; (1.) The fidelity of others should be a quickening motive to excite our diligence; and their dying testimony to the blessedness of Christ's ways, should comfort and encourage us to persevere in them. (2.) The day of our departure will be the brightest that ever dawned upon us, if we then enjoy the sure hope of the crown of righteousness. (3.) They who are faithful unto death, may with delight look back; and while they ascribe all to their Master's grace, they cannot but rejoice in the evidence which the review affords of their approved sincerity before him. (4.) Whatever difficulties are in our way, we have a good cause to bear us out, and should comfortably and courageously persevere: and, in that case, whatever we lose for Christ here, we shall, at least in eternity, be unspeakable gainers by him. (5.) There is an awful day at hand, and a righteous judge expected. Blessed and happy are they who truly love the day of his appearing, and can say with confidence, and real desire, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

2dly, Several directions are given to Timothy:

1. *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, as I especially need thy company at this time. For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and now, in this trying season, has shamefully deserted me, pursuing his own base and worldly interests, and is departed unto Thessalonica, to be out of the danger to which here he might, as my companion, have been exposed: Crescens is gone, on affairs of the church, to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia; so that I am almost left alone. Only Luke is with me, my true and faithful fellow-labourer; and Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.* Note; The love of this present world has fatally warped multitudes from their fidelity to Christ.

2. *Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* Whatever just cause of displeasure the apostle might have had formerly against him, he was now returned to his duty, and therewith to St. Paul's favour and regard.

3. *The cloke, or, as some render it, the desk, that I left at*

* See Lardner, Michaelis, Benson, Doddridge, Heylin, Calmet, Rapheus, Mintert, Grotius, Whitby, Bishop Sherlock, Parry, Wetstein, Barrington, Archbishop Tillotson, Clement, West, Bowyer, Hallett, Archbishop Leighton, Parkhurst, Clarke, Pitcair, Bengelius, Vitringa, Pliny, Eusebius, Mill, Diodati, Evans, Slater, Blackwall, Gataker, Morris, L'Enfant, Pearson, and Echarde.

Troas, with Carpus my host, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. What these writings contained, of which the apostle was so careful, is uncertain: some have thought it was the roll of his freedom; others, the copies of his epistles, which had been sent to the several churches: these they might include; but I believe they also referred to other things. See the Inferences on this chapter.

4. He admonishes him to beware of a bitter enemy to Christianity. *Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil, (Acts, xix. 33.) and still bears an implacable enmity to me. The Lord reward him according to his works, to whose righteous judgment I leave him: Of whom be thou aware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words,* and endeavoured to prejudice both Jews and Gentiles against that gospel which we preach. *Note;* Though no private revenge must dictate a thought or wish of resentment, yet obstinate and incorrigible enemies of truth and godliness are to be delivered up to an avenging God.

3dly, The apostle,

1. Informs Timothy of his present circumstances. *At my first answer, when I was called to defend myself before the emperor, no man stood with me, but all men, who could be of any service by their countenance or presence, forsook me, through fear and cowardice: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge, but that he would pardon this unfaithfulness, and bring them to repentance. Notwithstanding, though deserted by men, the Lord stood with me, and*

strengthened me to plead with boldness, freedom, and fidelity, the cause of his gospel; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might bear, who were present at my trial, or to whom the substance of it should be related; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, from the cruel Nero, or his prefect, and the jaws of death, which seemed to yawn for me. And I am fully confident, from long experience, that the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, that I shall never speak nor act unbecoming the character I bear, intimidated by any fear of sufferings; and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, giving me the inheritance in glory which he hath promised: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen! Note; (1.) In trying times we are not to be surprized, if many desert us, who promised very fair. (2.) If the Lord stand by us, we want no other support.

2. He sends his own and others' salutations, and hastens Timothy to come to him. *Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erasmus, the chamberlain, abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum, sick, not having any suggestion from the Lord, or power, miraculously to restore him. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren, in these parts.*

3. He concludes with his hearty benediction and prayer for him. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit, to quicken, teach, guide, preserve thee. Grace be with you, and all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
T I T U S.

P R E F A C E.

TITUS, who, as well as Timothy, was honoured with the office of an evangelist, had been left by St. Paul in the island of Crete, now called Candia, to overlook the churches in that isle, and provide them with fit and able ministers; Ch. i. 5. St. Paul gives him the same instructions as he had given to Timothy in the two preceding epistles. Among other things, he lays down a general rule, which ought to be ever a law to the faithful in regard to their ministers, namely, never to receive those men or those doctrines or precepts that turn from the truth, ver. 14. He then enforces in very strong terms the obligation which the doctrines of divine grace lay us under to apply ourselves to devotion and holiness; and, speaking in the same place of our redemption, he calls Jesus Christ the great God, Ch. ii. 13. an expression so strong and energetic, as alone ought for ever to silence those who have dared to dispute his divinity. After that, returning in the third chapter to the doctrines of grace, he attributes our acceptance with God so entirely to the divine mercy, as clearly to exclude every kind of merit. And, lest any one might erroneously suppose, that a doctrine making our justification entirely flow from grace through faith, without depending at all upon the righteousness of works, were capable of cooling in our souls the ardour of devotion, and the pursuit of holiness, St. Paul immediately adds this important explanation, serving to silence equally the profane and the careless mind, and depriving the advocates for justification by works of their best argument: ver. 8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.

CHAP. I.

For what end Titus was left in Crete. How they that are to be chosen ministers, ought to be qualified. The mouths of evil teachers are to be stopped: and what manner of men they are.

[Date uncertain.]

PAUL^a, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to^b the faith

of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth^c which is after godliness;

2^d * In hope of eternal life, which God, that^e cannot lie, promised^f before the world began;

3^g But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is^h committed unto me according to the commandment of

^a Acts, 13. 9. & 9. 15. & 22. 21. & 26. 16—18. Rom. 1. 5, 9, 11. James, 1. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 1. ^b Acts, 13. 48. John, 10. 26. Eph. 2. 8. 2 Tim. 1. 5. Col. 2. 12. ^c 1 Tim. 3. 16. & 6. 3. Ch. 2. 11, 12. ^d Rom. 8. 24. & 5. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Gal. 5. 5. Col. 1. 23. 1 Thess. 5. 8. Heb. 6. 18, 19. Ch. 3. 7. ^e Or for. ^f Numb. 23. 19. Heb. 6. 17, 18. 1 Sam. 15. 29. 2 Tim. 2. 13. ^g Rom. 1. 2. & 16. 25. Eph. 1. 4, 9. & 3. 9. Col. 1. 26. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 1. 20. Mat. 25. 34. ^h Rom. 16. 26. Col. 1. 6, 23, 26. Eph. 3. 5—8. 1 Cor. 1. 21. Mark, 16. 15. ⁱ Acts, 20. 24. 1 Cor. 9. 16. 2 Cor. 2. 12. & 4. 13. Gal. 1. 1, 11. & 2. 2, 7. 1 Tim. 1. 11, 12. & 2. 7. 2 Tim. 1. 10, 11. 1 Thess. 2. 4.

CHAP. I.

IN the inscription of this epistle, St. Paul asserted his apostleship, not with a view to raise himself in the estimation of Titus, but to make the false teachers in Crete, and all in every age who shall read this letter, sensible that every thing he ordered Titus to inculcate was of divine authority, ver. 1, 2.—And by calling Titus his genuine son by the common faith, he insinuated to the Cretans, not only that he had been converted by his instrumentality, but that he was a teacher of the same grace, and of the same holy dispositions, with himself, and as such he gave him his apostolical benediction, ver. 3, 4.—Next, he puts Titus in mind that he had left him in Crete, to ordain elders in every city where churches had been planted, ver. 5.—And to direct him in that important business, he described to him the character and qualifications necessary in bishops and deacons, that ordaining to these offices none but persons of that description, they might be able both to instruct the people, and to confute gainsayers, ver. 6—9.—especially those of the circumcision in Crete, whose character the apostle explained, ver. 10.—and whose mouths he told him it was necessary to stop, because they subverted whole families, by teaching the efficacy of the Jewish sacrifices and purifications to obtain pardon for sinners, ver. 11.—Wherefore, the apostle ordered Titus sharply to reprove both the teachers and the people who held such doctrines, and to charge them to give heed no longer to Jewish fables and precepts of men, calculated to support that pernicious error; particularly the precepts concerning meats and sacrifices, taught by men who turned away the truth, when it offered itself to them, ver. 13, 14.—Withal, to give the faithful an abhorrence of such teachers, the apostle observed, that both their understanding and their conscience were polluted, ver. 15.—They professed to know God, but in works they denied him, ver. 16.

TITUS.] This may be called "An epistle to the Cretans," as well as to Titus; for the apostle meant not only to instruct Titus, but also to furnish him with a rule to lay before the Cretans, to which he might appeal, whenever unworthy and unqualified persons attempted to intrude into the episcopal or ministerial office. Titus was a Greek. St. Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, to the great council held there in the year 49. And as Titus was of Gentile parents, St. Paul would not suffer him to be cir-

cumcised, that he might not abridge the liberty of the Gentile converts. Some years after this, St. Paul dispatched him to Corinth, to bring him an account of the state of that church, and afterwards sent him thither again, to hasten the collection for the poor Christians in Judea. After this, we hear no more of him till he is mentioned in this epistle, as having been with St. Paul in Crete. This epistle, according to Dr. Lardner, was written toward the end of the year 56, while St. Paul was in Macedonia, or near it. But Michaelis and others think it was more probably written in St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though they are not able to determine the precise year. Titus had been left at Crete, to settle the church which St. Paul had probably established there in his first journey to Rome, and afterwards: Acts, xxvii. 8. Titus, i. 5. The churches in Crete had not hitherto any bishops and ordained ministers; Titus was to appoint them; but he was to be upon his guard against some of the circumcision, who aspired to ecclesiastical offices. The island of Crete was the parent of Roman and Greek idolatry; and the Cretans so far excelled other nations in inventing gods, that they were called *the LIARS*. They were also distinguished for unnatural vices, and a spirit of sedition. The Cretan converts to Christianity were of course obliged to forsake idolatry, and the worship of images; but as the Cretans were Egyptians by descent, and had long intermixed the whims of Egyptian philosophy with Judaism, no church was in greater danger of adopting the absurd and heathen genealogies of the *Eones*: hence St. Paul warns them against all these errors, but particularly against those of the Judaizing teachers, who endeavoured to corrupt the purity of the gospel.

Ver. 1. *Paul, a servant of God.*] This is the only epistle of St. Paul, wherein he begins with calling himself a *servant*, or *slave*, devoted for ever to the service of God. According to the faith, would be rendered more properly, *for the faith*; that is to say, for promoting the faith of Christians; who, under the Messiah, are the elect people of God, as the Jews were under the Mosaic dispensation. Dr. Heylin well expresses the meaning of the passage,—*To preach the faith of God's elect, and make known the truth, as it promotes piety.*

Ver. 2. *Before the world began*] Πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων, before the secular ages; or before the giving of the law of Moses. God

God our Saviour;

4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon

angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught; that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

1 Tim. 1. 1. & 2. 3. & 4. 10. 2 Cor. 2. 3. & 8. 6, 16. & 12. 18. Gal. 2. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 4. 15. See Rom. 1. 7. 2 Cor. 13. 11, 14. Philem. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. Acts, 27. 7, 12, 13. left undone. 1 Tim. 3. 2-7, 12. 1 Thess. 2. 10. 1 Tim. 4. 11. & 6. 10-12. 2 Tim. 2. 22. Gen. 18. 19. Job. 24. 15. 2 Cor. 6. 3-10. 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. Mat. 21. 45. 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3. Prov. 26. 12, 16. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Lev. 10. 9. Eph. 5. 18. Ezek. 44. 21. 1 Pet. 5. 2. 11. 56. 30-32. 1 Tim. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 3. 2, 11. 1 Cor. 6. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 22. 23. Jude, 3. 1 Tim. 1. 10. & 6. 3. Ch. 2. 1, 2, 7, 8. Or in teaching. Acts, 15. 15, 21. & 20. 29. Rom. 16. 17, 18. Gal. 1. 6-8. & 3. 1. Eph. 4. 14. 1 Tim. 1. 4, 6, 7. & 5. 3-5, 20. Col. 2. 8, 18-22. 2 Tim. 4. 4. & 3. 11. 2 Pet. 2. 1-3, 10-19. 1 John, 4. 1. Ver. 9. Ch. 3. 10. Rev. 2. 2. Mat. 23. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 6. 11. 56. 11. Ezek. 13. 19. Mic. 3. 5, 11. Rom. 16. 18. Phil. 3. 19. 1 Tim. 3. 3, 8. & 6. 5, 10.

God had promised the gospel, in an obscure manner, to the patriarchs before Abraham; but to him it was promised more explicitly. Now that promise to Abraham, was before the secular times—the jubilees under the law, and consequently, before the distinction of the world into Jews and Gentiles. But what the God, who cannot lie or break his word, had promised so long before to Abraham, the law of Moses, which intervened, could not disannul. See Rom. xvi. 25. Gal. iii. 17.

Ver. 3. In due times] In his own proper times. See 1 Tim. ii. 6. Gal. iv. 4. Ephes. i. 10. ii. 7. In this the apostle might probably allude to the prophecies, and particularly to the celebrated prophecy of Daniel concerning the seventy weeks; ch. ix. 24. Instead of commandment, some read appointment. Dr. Benson upon the 4th verse, observing that the words mercy and the Lord are omitted in some manuscripts, makes this remark, which deserves much attention: "It is not very material," says he, "as to the sense, whether these words be left out or retained; and indeed, I have found this observation to hold good concerning most of the various readings: that is, it is of little or no moment, as to the sense and connection, whether you receive or reject them."

Ver. 5.] Before he proceeds to the principal design of this epistle, the apostle briefly reminds Titus of his leaving him in Crete, to settle the churches which he had planted there, and to ordain elders in every city, to be bishops over the several churches. After this he describes the characters of such as he was to ordain; namely, that they should be men of integrity, and of an unspotted reputation; and particularly such as understood the liberty of the Gentile Christians, and that would oppose the Judaizers; who were bad men, and very industrious in making proselytes, ver. 5-16. It is well known that the word πολις, rendered city, frequently signifies a country town only, and

sometimes a village. Crete had formerly been famous for having a hundred cities; but Pliny, who wrote not long after the sending of this epistle to Titus, found only forty cities there, and the bare memory of sixty more; and most of these forty called cities, were little better than villages. Strabo says, that Crete had many cities, but only three of any great note.

Ver. 6. Having faithful children] Having believing children. This is mentioned with great propriety; for if a man were not careful to instruct his children in the principles of Christianity, there would be great reason to doubt whether he were hearty in the belief of it himself; and if a man had only unbelieving children in his house, that is to say, such as were so obstinate that they could not be brought to embrace Christianity, by any of the arguments which could be laid before them, in that age of miracles, it would be a great discouragement, and in some circumstances a great hindrance to him, from pursuing the duties of a Christian elder, or bishop; and those evils into which such obstinate infidel children might fall, would very probably bring a reproach upon the family, which might in a degree hurt the character of him who presided in it. See 2 Tim. ii. 24, 26. and 1 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

Ver. 7. Not self-willed] Αυθιςτον: pleased with himself, and despising others; supercilious, haughty, insolent, surly. This vice, in our ordinary conversation, is directly opposed to affability or courtesy.

Ver. 8. Sober] Prudent, as the word may be rendered. The following word temperate includes all sobriety.

Ver. 10. For there are many unruly, &c.] St. Paul had his eye from the beginning of the epistle all along, upon the persons whom he describes in this and the following verses. This close and excellent writer never loses sight of his subject; but he proceeds so gradually to speak

12 One of themselves, *even* a * prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 This witness is true : wherefore ^b rebuke them sharply, that they may be ^c found in the faith ;

14 ^d Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

15 * Unto the pure all things *are* pure : but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure ; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 ^f They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work * reprobate.

* Acts, 17. 28. Rom. 2. 14. ^b 1 Tim. 5. 20. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Ch. 2. 15. ^c Ch. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 7. 10, 19. & 4. 6. & 6. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 13. Rev. 2. 13. & 3. 8, 10. ^d 1 Tim. 1. 4, 6, 7. & 4. 7. & 6. 5—5, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 4. Mat. 5. 9. Col. 2. 20—22. Il. 29. 13. & 66. 3, 4. ^e Mat. 15. 11. Luke, 11. 39, 41. Acts, 10. 15. Rom. 14. 14, 20, 23. 1 Cor. 6. 12. & 10. 23, 25. 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Hag. 2. 13. ^f Il. 29. 13. & 58. 2. Esck. 33. 31. Hof. 11. 12. & 6. 4, 7. Rom. 2. 17—24. 2 Tim. 3. 5, 8. Jude, 4. Rom. 1. 28—32. * Or void of judgment.

plainly, that *we* may lose sight of it, if we do not attend very carefully. See 1 Tim. i. 6, 7.

Ver. 12. *One of themselves—a prophet of their own*] Epimenides, whose words St. Paul here quotes, is said by Diogenes Laertius to have been a great favourite of the gods ; but Aristotle says, he never foretold any future event : which is a plain argument, that the word *prophet* is sometimes used in a very large sense. Indeed, the words *poet* and *prophet* were often used promiscuously by the Greeks and Romans ; perhaps, because their poets pretended to be inspired, and were by some believed to be so : see Acts, xvii. 28. From this, as well as other places, it appears, that St. Paul had been well read in the Greek poets ; probably in his younger days he was brought up in the schools of Tarfus, before he went to Jerusalem, to sit at the feet of Gamaliel : and even after he was an inspired apostle, he did not think that he acted out of character, when, as apostle of the Gentiles, he quoted their poets. Perhaps it might have been, in some points of view, more proper to have translated the Greek verse before us in such a manner, that it might have read as a verse in English :

“ False Cretans ! savage beasts, with bellies slow.”

The poet here seems to suggest a remarkable contrast, to shew what a mixture there was of *ferceness* and *luxury* in the character of the Cretans. Savage beasts are generally active and nimble ; but these men, while they had the fury of lions and tygers, indulged themselves so much in the most sordid idleness and intemperance, that they grew *all belly* as it were, and like to a breed of swine common in the Eastern countries, which were often so burdened with fat, that they could hardly move. As for their proneness to falsehood, it is well known, that the word Κρητιζειν, “ to talk like a Cretan,” was a proverb for *lying* ; as the word Κορινθιαζειν, “ to live like a Corinthian,” was for a luxurious and *debauched* life ; and it is remarkable, that Polybius scarcely ever mentions the Cretans without some severe censure. Bishop Warburton accounts for the origin of this character of the Cretans in the following manner : “ I supposed the view was enlarged, and the Cretans were called *liars* upon more accounts in St. Paul’s time ; but the *rise* of this proverb seems to have been this : while the other Greeks, in their lesser mysteries, concealed the origin of the gods, who were dead mortals raised to divine honour, for public benefits done to their country,

“ or to mankind ; the Cretans proclaimed this to all the world, by shewing the tomb of *Jupiter* himself, and boasting that ‘ the father of gods and men’ was a native of that country. This so exasperated all Greece against them, that they called them *eternal liars*. Thus Lucan, lib. 8. and so Callimachus, with a variety of other authors. The reason why they were so exasperated at the Cretans for publishing this, seems to have been the affront it gave to the worshippers of idols, or the publishing what the politic protectors of the mysteries would have kept secret.”

Ver. 13. *Sharply*] Ἀποτίμως ;—with a cutting severity. The word is an allusion to a surgeon’s cutting away the dead flesh, and that even to the quick. We are to observe, that the apostle speaks here of reproofing *vice*, not error. Timothy is exhorted to *rebuke with all long-suffering* ; 2 Tim. iv. 2. and we may remark, that there is a degree of long-suffering and gentleness, very consistent with all that severity which faithfulness requires : which is not that of boisterous passion, ill nature, and scurrility, but of meek, though resolute zeal for God, and friendship to the offender ; which yet will not be silenced by trifling excuses, nor fail seriously to represent the fatal consequences which may attend the evil reproofed.

Ver. 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*] “ I know these Judaizing teachers value themselves highly upon the distinctions of food, which they inculcate as of so great importance to purity : but they are much mistaken. Unto Christians who are pure and upright, all sorts of meat are clean and pure ; but unto those who are polluted with vice, and who, though they understand the liberty of Christians, are *unfaithful*, — ἀπίστοις, — and would impose upon Christians the rituals of the Jewish law ;—unto such, I say, nothing is clean and pure ; but even their understanding and conscience are defiled, which ought to be their guide and director.”

Ver. 16. *They profess that they know God,*] This was their grand pretence for Christianity, and opposing St. Paul ; namely, that they best understood the revelation of the mind and will of God in the gospel, as well as under the law ; but at the same time pride, and covetousness, and other vices, animated and influenced them. See Rom. ii. 17, &c. iii. 10—19. 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. Jude, 4. 16. The word *reprobate*, in this verse, means disapproved and condemned when brought to the standard of God’s word,

†

though

CHAP. II.

Directions given unto Titus, both for his doctrine and life. Of the duty of servants, and in general of all Christians.

BUT speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2^b That the aged men be * sober, grave,

* 1 Tim. 1. 10. & 6. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 13. & 4. 3. Ch. 1. 9, 13. Ver. 2, 11—14. Ch. 3. 8. ^b Prov. 16. 31. 1 John, 2. 13, 14. Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 13. Ps. 71. 18. & 92. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 5—8. Deut. 32. 29. * Or vigilant. ^c 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. & 3. 11. & 5. 5, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 1—5. Phil. 4. 3. Ver. 4. † Or by women. ^d Or maketh, or devils. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 11.

temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3^c The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh † holiness; not^d false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

though they are among the first to judge and condemn others.

Inferences.—Never let it be forgotten by any who call themselves Christians, that the faith of God's people is the acknowledgment of the truth, which is according to godliness. Never let the great design of Christianity be lost in an eager contention for any of its appendages, or any of its parts. Yet, alas, how often has it, in particular instances, been wounded almost to death, in a furious attempt to rescue it, and that, sometimes perhaps, from only an imaginary danger.

That we may be more sensible of its vital influence, let us ever retain the hope of that eternal life which it proposes, as the great end of all our pursuits; even of that life which God that cannot lie hath promised to all his faithful saints. Let us rejoice to think that so immense a superstructure has so firm, so divine a foundation; and let us never give it up for any thing that a flattering world, always ready to engage, and slow to perform, can promise.

Let us ever be very thankful for the provision which God hath made for the manifestation of his word, through preaching, and for his goodness in raising up faithful pastors to his church, overseers in every age, who have been blameless, sober, just, holy, and temperate. Such may all be that appear under that sacred character; able, by their doctrine to instruct, by their reasoning to convince, by their practice to edify; ever solicitous, that they may not neglect their pastoral services, that they may not lord it proudly over their brethren, that they may not be transported by furious passions, or misguided by rash conclusions, or perverted by low interests, and the greediness of filthy lucre; but that they may approve themselves the faithful stewards of God, and promote the good order of his house; and, so far as their influence can reach, the happiness of every member of his family.

In order to this, let them look well to their own houses, that nothing may be wanting on their part to make their children tractable, faithful, and sober. And let the children of ministers consider the obligations which they are under to cultivate a teachable spirit, and to maintain the strictest decency in their whole deportment; as remembering the superior advantages they may be supposed to enjoy for religious improvement, and how much a minister's reputation and usefulness depend upon the regularity of his family.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle opens the epistle with his usual address.

1. He sets forth his own divine commission and apostle-

ship. This epistle comes from Paul, who counts it his highest honour to be called a servant of God in the gospel of his dear son, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to bear the glad tidings of his salvation to Gentile lands, according to the faith of God's elect; that is to say, the faith of all genuine Christians, who have accepted the offers of grace, and yielded to the calls of God in the preaching of his gospel or otherwise, and enjoy the living power of faith in Christ: or, as some very eminent commentators have explained it, the faith of Christians in the general, they being all an elect generation, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and St. Paul being an apostle in reference to them all; to those to whom he was a favour of death, as well as to those to whom he was a favour of life: 2 Cor. ii. 16. He was accordingly sent to call all these, within his sphere, to the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; and which, having heartily embraced himself, he now with delight published to others, in hope of eternal life, which all who continue to live godly in Christ Jesus are sure to attain unto; because God, that cannot lie, hath promised it unto them in Christ Jesus, before the world began, or, as it should be translated, before the secular ages of the Jews (see the annotations); but both in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour, who hath authorized and enabled me to discharge the important trust. Note; (1.) The highest dignity is to be the servant of the living God. (2.) They who are ministers of God, must be indefatigable in preaching. Dumb dogs that cannot, or will not bark, are not of the great Shepherd's appointment.

2. He wishes Titus the best of blessings. To Titus, mine own son after the common faith, my spiritual child, begotten in the gospel, be grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. Note; All believers have one common faith, and are united to the same Jesus.

2dly, St. Paul,

1. Reminds him of the end for which he was left in Crete. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, directing the Cretan Christians concerning the proper discipline, worship, and conduct, to be observed by them; and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, such as shall be found duly qualified for the ministerial work.

2. He describes the character of those whom he should ordain. If any be blameless, having a good report of those who know him best; the husband of one wife, no polygamist; having faithful children brought up in the nurture and admonition

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands; that the word of God be not blasphemed.

^c Or wife. Ver. 2, 6. & 13, 8—10.

^f Ch. 3. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 5, 6. Eph. 5. 22. Acts, 9. 36. 1 Tim. 5. 10, 14. & 6. 1. & 2. 11, 15. Ver. 3, 10. Rom. 1. 24.

monition of the Lord, *not accused of riot, or unruly*, dissolute and refractory, but kept under due restraint, neither a disgrace to themselves nor their parents. *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God*, appointed to that high charge in his holy family, and therefore of a character irrefragable; *not self-willed*, of a rash and obdurate temper; *not soon angry*, and firing at every provocation; *not given to wine*, addicted to drunkenness, or fond of the glass; *no striker*, violent in his passions, *not given to filthy lucre*, a mercenary wretch, who lives for hire, *but one who serves out of zeal for Christ and the souls of men*. He must be also *a lover of hospitality*, entertaining poor strangers, and Christians driven from their homes by the fury of persecution; *a lover of good men*, without prejudice or exception; *sober*, grave and prudent in his carriage and deportment; *just*, and upright in his conversation; *holy* in all his conduct; *temperate* in his desires and appetites; *holding fast the faithful word*, maintaining the purity of the gospel, and dispensing it with all fidelity, *as he hath been taught by us*; *that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and comfort the true members of Christ's church, and to convince the gainsayers of their errors*. For such spiritual wisdom is necessary because *there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers*, in Crete as well as in other churches, who, though professing Christianity, walk disorderly, and with their heretical tenets draw away disciples after them; *especially they of the circumcision*, who are the great corrupters of the faith, urging circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic institutions as necessary to salvation; *whose mouths must be stopped*, not by force, but by sound truth and scriptural arguments to detect their fallacies and silence their cavils; *who subvert whole houses*, insinuating themselves into the families of professors, *teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*, adapting their teaching to the palates of their hearers, in order to insinuate into their confidence, and enrich themselves at their expense.

3dly, The national character of the Cretans was very bad, therefore they would need sharp rebuke.

1. The apostle quotes one of their own writers. *One of themselves, even a prophet, or poet, of their own, Epimenides, said, the Cretans are always liars*, peculiarly addicted to this sin; *evil beasts, ravenous, gluttonous, and insatiate in their appetites; slow bellies, luxurious and indolent; and this witness is true*, it is their just character. *Wherefore,*

2. *Rebuke them sharply*; such scandalous deeds required severe and cutting remonstrances, *that, their sins and danger being set before them, they may be found in the faith*, warned by these rebukes of others to be more watchful, or recovered from such grievous backsliding; *not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men*, the ridiculous legends and vain traditions of those Judaizing teachers, *that turn from the truth*, apostates themselves, and labouring to pervert the faith of others, and to adulterate the blessed gospel of grace, by enforcing upon the conscience the

abrogated rites of the Mosaic law. *Unto the pure all things are pure*, and no ceremonial uncleanness is contracted by the touch or taste of things forbidden by the Levitical institutions: *but unto them that are defiled, by the reigning impurity of their hearts and lives, and unbelieving, destitute of faith in Jesus, there is nothing pure*, all they do and say is abominable in the sight of God; *but even their mind and conscience is defiled*, and, when the fountain is thus polluted, every stream which flows from it must needs be foul. *They profess indeed that they know God, and make great boasts of their wisdom; but in works they deny him*, and act as infidels, *being abominable in their spirit and conduct, disobedient to all God's holy laws as well as enemies to his gospel, and, in short, unto every good work reprobate*, unfit and unable for, as well as disinclined to, the practice of them. *Note*; (1.) Stubborn sinners call for severe rebuke. Lenity, where the knife is required, is real cruelty to the patient. (2.) The best preservative against the wiles of deceivers, is being found in the faith. They who are firmly grounded on Christ, will not easily be shaken. (3.) They who are destitute of right principles, must necessarily err in all their conduct: every thing they do, even what is in itself right, as to the matter and deed itself, becomes sin to them, because it proceeds from wrong principles, and is directed to wrong ends. (4.) It is not sounding professions, but holy lives, which characterize real Christians. *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, "We speak not, but live, great things."

CHAP. II.

THE apostle having directed Titus to ordain elders in every city, and described the character and qualifications of the persons whom he was to invest with offices in the church; also, having laid open the bad character and evil practices of the Judaizers in Crete, and ordered him to rebuke them sharply, he in this chapter gave him a short view of the duties of his office as bishop and superintendent both of the teachers and of the people in Crete. He was, in opposition to the Judaizers, to inculcate on the people such precepts only as were suitable to the wholesome doctrine of the gospel, ver. 1.—And with respect to the aged men who held sacred offices, he was to enjoin them to be attentive to the behaviour of those under their care; to be grave in their own deportment; prudent in giving admonitions and rebukes; and spiritually healthy by faith, love, patience, ver. 2.—In like manner, those aged women who were employed to teach the young of their own sex, he was to exhort to a deportment becoming their sacred character. They were neither to be slanderers, nor intemperate in the use of liquors, but to be good teachers, ver. 3.—In particular, they were to persuade the young women who were married, to do their duty to their husbands, their children, and their families, that the gospel might not be evil spoken of through their bad behaviour, ver. 4, 5.—On young men

6 Young men likewise exhort to be * sober minded.

7 ^h In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; ¹ that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

9 *Exhort* ^k servants to be obedient unto their

own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things; not † answering again;

10 ¹ Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may ^m adorn the doctrine of ⁿ God our Saviour in all things.

11 For ^o the grace of God ‡ that bringeth salvation hath ^p appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, ^q denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

* Or discreet. ⁶ Ver. 2, 4. Eccl. 11. 9. & 12. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Prov. 1. 4. & 22. 6. ^h 1 Theff. 2. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 3. 1 Tim. 6. 11, 12, 31 & 4. 12, 16. 2 Tim. 1. 13. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 13. & 5. 10. ⁱ 1 Tim. 5. 14. & 6. 3, 20. 1 Pet. 2. 12, 15. & 2. 16. with Luke, 1. 6. Acts, 24. 16. Phil. 2. 14—16. 1 Theff. 2. 16. ^k Eph. 6. 5. Col. 3. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 12. † Or gainstaying. ¹ Gen. 31. 38, 39. & 39. 6. ^m Mat. 5. 16. Eph. 4. 1. & 5. 8. Phil. 2. 15, 16. & 1. 27. & 4. 8. & 1. 9, 10. 1 Theff. 2. 17. 1 Tim. 5. 14. & 6. 1. 1 Pet. 3. 15, 16. Neh. 5. 9. ⁿ See 1 Tim. 1. 1. Ch. 1. 3. ^o Ch. 3. 4. Rom. 5. 20, 21. or Acts, 20. 24, 32. & 13. 26. Eph. 1. 13. Mark, 16. 15, 16. If. 12. 1—3. Heb. 2. 3. ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{kv} ^{kw} ^{kx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{xg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

he was to inculcate the government of their passions, ver. 6.—But above all, both in teaching and behaviour, Titus was to make himself a pattern of the graces and virtues which he enjoined to others, ver. 7, 8.—Titus was to inculcate on servants obedience to their masters, diligence in their work, and honesty in every thing committed in trust to them, ver. 9, 10.—Withal to make the Cretan bishops and people sensible of the impiety of the doctrine of the Jewish teachers, concerning the efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices in procuring pardon for sin, the apostle declared that the gospel was given for this very purpose, to teach men that salvation was alone from the grace of God, and that the gospel required us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, &c. in expectation of a future judgment, ver. 11—14.—These things the apostle ordered Titus to teach in the plainest and boldest manner, agreeably to the authority with which he was invested as an evangelist, ver. 15.

Ver. 2. Sober,] Or, Prudent.
 Ver. 3. In behaviour as becometh holiness,] That they behave with sanctity of manners. Heylin. [Exhort] to that steadiness which becometh saints. Doddridge. See 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3—5.
 Ver. 5. Keepers at home,] The word Οἰκῆσις, according to Elsner, signifies not only *keeping at home*, but an *attentive looker after domestic affairs*. Hefychius explains it by “one who takes care of the things belonging to the house, and keeps them.” Some would join the next epithet with this, and read *good housekeepers*. That the word of God be not blasphemed, means, “that they may give no occasion by their behaviour for any reproach to be cast upon that Christianity which they profess.” Heylin reads it, *So that religion may not be reproached on their account*.
 Ver. 7. In doctrine shewing uncorruptness, &c.] Speaking nothing but the genuine truth; and let it be attended with a gravity in declaring it, proportionable to its importance, and proceed from sincerity of heart.
 Ver. 10. Not purloining,] *Not privately defrauding or embezzling*—Μη νορφιζομενους: which properly signifies *keeping back part of the worth of any thing*, and is used in the case

of Ananias's secreting a part, where the whole was pretended to be returned, Acts, v. 2, 3. *Servants*, at least among the Heathens, might probably do this very frequently.
 Ver. 11, 12. For the grace of God—hath appeared, &c.] The word *Xapis* properly signifies *favour*, and in the sacred writings expresses the free and unmerited goodness of God, in sending his only-begotten Son to declare his will, and to redeem us from our iniquities by his death. Sometimes the *effects* of this wonderful kindness of God,—as the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost,—are called *grace*; and sometimes the *gospel* itself is expressed by this same word (Col. i. 6.); in which sense it is to be understood in the passage before us: when the apostle says that the *gospel*, or the grace of God manifested in the gospel, *hath appeared*, *hath risen*, or *shined* out to all men, he alludes to the appearance of the heavenly bodies, and the brightness and glory with which they shine upon the world. Our blessed Lord is himself compared to a *light shining in darkness*, John, i. 5. and the apostles are spoken of under the same image, Matth. v. 14. The original of the 11th verse appeared ambiguous to our translators; for though they render it in the text *the grace of God—hath appeared to all men*, (according to which they may be understood of the gospel's being preached not only unto Jews, but to men of all nations, and of all ranks and orders in life;) yet they have given a different turn to the words in their *marginal reading*, which is,—*the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared*: and as the original will very well admit of this sense, so it is certainly agreeable to the other scriptures, and to the gracious purpose of God, which is well expressed by St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 4. This *grace of God*, which offers salvation to all men, of every rank and degree, does not however disengage any from the obligations that they are under to lead a holy life; but teaches us that, *denying ungodliness, &c.* which words contain a brief summary of the whole Christian practice. By *ungodliness*, we may understand atheism and irreligion, blasphemy, perjury, profane cursing and swearing, contempt of God, a want of due reverence to him, neglect of his worship, judging hardy,

13 ' Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ;

14 ' Who gave himself for us, ' that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1 Cor. 1. 7. Phil. 3. 20, 21. Acts, 24. 15. Col. 3. 4. 2 Tim. 4. 1, 8. Heb. 9. 28. 2 Pet. 3. 12, 14. 1 John, 3. 2. Rom. 8. 23, 24. Gal. 5. 5. Mat. 23. 30, 31. & 25. 31—46. & 19. 28. 1 Thess. 4. 16. Rev. 20. 11, 12. Mat. 20. 28. & 26. 28. Gal. 1. 4. & 2. 20. & 3. 13. & 4. 4. Eph. 5. 3, 23—27. & 1. 7. & 2. 10. Col. 2. 11—15. 1 Tim. 1. 15. & 2. 6. Heb. 7. 12, 14. & 10. 12, 14. & 7. 25, 26. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. Exod. 19. 5, 6. Deut. 7. 6. & 26. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Eph. 2. 10. Ch. 3. 6.

hardly, or speaking disrespectfully of his providence,—disobedience to his will. By *worldly lusts* may be understood those other vices of mankind, which are called the works of the flesh; (Gal. v. 19, &c.)—every thing contrary to the *sobriety* and *righteousness* recommended in the next sentence; the former of which consists in the right government of our natural appetites and passions, while the latter comprehends all the duties which we owe to our neighbours. *Godliness* or *piety* consists in that high veneration, and those just conceptions, which we should entertain of the Supreme Being, expressed by prayer and thanksgiving, by loving and fearing him, putting our trust in him, and submitting to him in all events.

Ver. 13. And the glorious appearing] *Even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour.* We may observe, in support of this version, which is perfectly agreeable to the original, that we never read in scripture of the appearance of God the Father; and consequently we have in this text as strong a proof as possible of the true divinity of Jesus Christ. See 2 Pet. i. 1.

Ver. 14. A peculiar people,] The word *περιούσιον*, rendered *peculiar*, does not appear to have been used by any of the ancient prophane writers. The LXX seem first to have framed it, in order to express the Hebrew *סגולה* *Segleh*, a *peculium*, a peculiar treasure or property. The phrase *ἄλλο περιούσιον* signifies “a *supernumerary people*, a “people wherein God had a superlative property and interest, above and besides his common interest in all the “nations of the world,” says the learned Jos. Mede, p. 125. The pious *Jews* were formerly God’s *peculiar people*; his peculiar people under the gospel are genuine *Christians*: they are distinguished or separated from the world by their being devoted to Christ. All real Christians are the peculiar people of God under the gospel; but perhaps the apostle of the Gentiles, in writing to a Gentile evangelist, among Gentile churches, might have here a more particular reference to the Gentile Christians, who had not formerly been the peculiar people of God, and whom the Judaizers would still have excluded from that number, unless they would submit to their impositions. It should be observed particularly with what strength and emphasis the apostle speaks throughout these verses of the absolute necessity of a life of holiness and purity, and of good works: and when our Lord and his apostles have laid such a stress upon good works, none who profess Christianity can neglect the practice of them without the extreme peril of their souls; and none who profess to be teachers of that Christianity can speak of them with contempt or indifference, without bringing a grievous offence upon the faith of Christ: and woe be to them by whom such offence cometh! See 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Inferences.—Scarcely does the word of God afford a more instructive and comprehensive *summary* of the *gospel*, than that which is given in this chapter. It gives us a view of the *nature* of the dispensation, as a *doctrine of grace*; and, at the same time, a *doctrine according to godliness*. It hath *appeared to all men*, and it *bringeth the faithful to salvation*, by inculcating the most salutary lessons that man can receive. It teaches us *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, how pressing soever their solicitations may be. It instructs us in all the branches of *our duty, to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow Christians*. It guides us to uniform and complete goodness; not extolling any one part, to the neglect or injury of the rest, but tending to produce this beautiful birth, entire in all its members, and then to nourish it to its full maturity. As we are slow of heart to attend to such instructions, it enforces them with *motives* the most generous and the most animating. It represents to us, as it were in *prophetic vision*, that *blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; when he shall come with everlasting blessings in his hands, to reward all his faithful people; and with the terrors of divine vengeance, to be poured forth upon all that have rejected the authority of his gospel. And, that the most powerful considerations of *gratitude* may join with *love* of the highest interest, it directs our eyes to this divine triumphant Saviour, as having once *given himself to torture and death for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, devoted to God, and zealous of good works*. And surely, if this view cannot prevail upon us to consecrate ourselves to God, and to engage with vigour in his service, we must be utterly insensible, and worthy of the severest punishment.

Let these lessons, therefore, every where be *taught with all authority*. Let them be addressed at once to the *meanest* and the *greatest* of mankind; that they may join in a pious care, *to adorn the doctrine of such a Saviour, and to secure their share in such a salvation*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle proceeds to direct Titus in the faithful discharge of his office. *But*, in contradiction to these deceivers, *speake thou the things which become sound doctrine*, the wholesome truths of God’s life-giving word, dividing it aright to every man, according to their age, station, and circumstances.

1. *That the aged men*, as their years as well as profession especially demand, *be sober*, or vigilant, circumspect in their conduct; *grave*, in habit, manners, conversation, that they may engage the reverence of their younger brethren; *temperate* and prudent, having their passions and appetites in subjection; *sound in faith*, in doctrine and practice; *in charity enlarged*; *in patience exemplary*, bearing the provocations of others with meekness, and not fretful under their

15. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man de-

¹ 1 Tim. 1. 3. & 5. 7, 20. & 4. 12. ² 2 Tim. 4. 2. & 2. 14, 15. ³ 1 Cor. 16. 17. Ch. 1. 9, 13,

their own infirmities. Such old disciples are noble ornaments to their Christian profession.

2. *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, in dress, conversation, and deportment; not false accusers, not slandering and defaming any, nor sowing discord among brethren; not given to much wine, drunkenness, or the love of liquor, being in women doubly odious and hateful; teachers of good things, by their example and discourse inculcating on their children every thing which may adorn the Christian name.*

3. What the aged must teach. The younger women should learn of them *to be sober, avoiding every appearance of wantonness, excess, or levity; to love their husbands, cleaving to them in warm affection; to love their children, training them up from infancy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to be discreet in the management of their families; chaste, shewing the most unfeigned modesty and purity of manners; keepers at home, not gadding about to the neglect of their domestic affairs, but ever best pleased to be in their own house; good, kind and gentle to their servants, and, like Dorcas, full of alms-deeds and good works; obedient to their own husbands, delighting to serve and please them; that the word of God be not blasphemed by a contrary behaviour, which would give the adversaries of Christianity occasion to speak reproachfully.* Note; Nothing makes Christianity appear so amiable as the conscientious discharge of the relative duties which it enjoins.

4. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded, serious, solid, tractable, having a due sense of their own inexperience, and willing to be ruled and advised by their elder and wiser friends.*

2dly, We have a particular direction for Titus himself, who should be the example of what he taught to his brethren. *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; practising what he preached: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, declaring the pure unadulterated truth, and maintaining a single eye to God's glory and the benefit of immortal souls; gravity, with all seriousness delivering his message, and with all sincerity; using sound speech that cannot be condemned, inculcating scripture truths in scripture language, and with such plainness and simplicity as that he that is of the contrary part, and would be glad to carp at and censure any ambiguous expression, may be ashamed of his malicious design, having no evil thing to say of you, finding no just charge of error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, to allege against you.* Note; (1.) They who preach to others, must by their practice prove that they themselves believe; else how can it be thought that others should credit them. (2.) Many watch for the halting of Christ's ministers; and the knowledge of this should make them more watchful over all that they speak or do, that confusion may cover their malignant enemies.

3dly, The duty of servants is prescribed. *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, with inward respect, as well as all outward dutiful submission; and to please them well in all things lawful to be done; not answer-*

ing again, disputing their orders, murmuring at their commands, or daring to make an impertinent or saucy reply; not purloining the least thing from them, but, to a crumb of bread, strictly honest; nor conniving at the least waste or robbery committed by others; shewing all good fidelity, true to every trust reposed in them, speaking with the greatest veracity, and punctual in the observance of their masters' orders; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and even in the eyes of their unbelieving masters, if under such, recommend the religion which they profess. Note; Such a servant as is here described, is a great acquisition. Would to God that those who make profession of godliness, might oftener read this apostolic directory.

4thly, The strongest motives are suggested to enforce the practice before recommended.

1. This is one great end of our redemption. *For the grace of God, displayed in the gospel word, that bringeth salvation, declaring the free mercy of God in Christ to miserable sinners, hath appeared in the most illustrious manner, to all men, of all ranks, degrees, and nations; teaching us, that denying ungodliness of every kind, and worldly lusts, whether of the flesh or of the eye, or the pride of life, we should live soberly, in the government and subduel of every inordinate appetite and passion; righteously, with unimpeached integrity and uprightness in our dealings towards men; and godly, in all acts of public and private devotion, in the use of every holy ordinance, and with a constant regard to the divine glory in this present world, full as it is of evil and temptation.* Note; (1.) The gospel is a revelation of mercy to all ranks and degrees; and God appears eminently glorious therein, in justifying the chief of sinners who believe in Jesus. (2.) Whenever we are truly partakers of grace, the blessed influence thereof will appear on our hearts and lives, effectually engaging us to renounce every known sin, and powerfully quickening us for the discharge of every duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves. The doctrines of grace are the only principles which can produce righteousness and true holiness.

2. We expect the appearing of the great Judge, and therefore are peculiarly called upon to prepare to meet him: *Looking for that blessed hope, the great object of it, the Lord from heaven; and the glorious appearing of the great God and, or even, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall shortly sit upon the throne of his glory, when all nations shall be gathered before him, to receive from his lips their irreversible sentence, and in whose favour we have a gracious interest; who gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, both from the guilt and power and nature of it; and might purify unto himself a peculiar people, yielding to be saved by grace, and thereby taken from the corrupted mass of mankind to be to the praise of his glory; and zealous of good works, influenced by the divine principle of faith which worketh by love, aiming at the advancement of their Redeemer's honour, and giving themselves up to be guided by his word*

C H A P. III.

Titus is yet further directed by Paul, both concerning the things he should teach, and not teach: he is willed also to reject obstinate heretics: which done, he appointeth him both time and place, wherein he should come unto him; and so concludeth.

PUT^a them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

^a Rom. 13. 1—6. 1 Tim. 2. 1. 1 Pet. 23. 1—17. Mat. 22. 21. Jer. 27. 17. Prov. 24. 21. Eccl. 8. 2. & 10. 4. with 2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 8. Gal. 6. 9, 10. Eph. 2. 10. Ch. 2. 14. Ver. 8. 14. Phil. 4. 8. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Pet. 2. 5—8. Pf. xv. ^c Jam. 4. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 15, 23. & 3. 9. 1 Tim. 3. 3. Ch. 1. 10. ^d 1 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Eph. 4. 2. Phil. 3. 5. Col. 3. 12, 13. Gal. 5. 23. & 6. 1. 2 Theff. 2. 7. ^e Rom. 3. 9—18. & 1. 28—32. 1 Cor. 6. 11, 9, 10. Eph. 2. 1—4, 12. & 4. 17—19. & 5. 3—8. Gal. 4. 8. & 5. 19—21. Col. 1. 21. & 3. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 3. ^f Rom. 5. 20, 21. Eph. 2. 4—10, 13—22. Ch. 2. 11. 1 Cor. 6. 11. ^g 1 Tim. 1. 1. & 2. 3. & 4. 10. Ch. 1. 3. & 2. 10. Jude, 25. Luke, 1. 47. If. 12. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

and will. *Note;* (1.) Every believer has a blessed hope before him, under the influence of which he lives comfortably, and supported by which, if faithful, he dies happily. (2.) They who would meet the great God their Saviour in peace, must be found among his redeemed from iniquity, and experience a present deliverance from the power and nature of sin. (3.) Christ's people are indeed *peculiar* in their manners, temper, and conduct, distinguished from the world in which they dwell, by the purity of their lives, and their zeal for good works.

3. The apostle enjoins Titus to urge these things upon the consciences of his hearers. *These things speak with all freedom, and exhort them diligently to observe; and rebuke with all authority those who dare oppose the truth, and would maintain their erroneous principles and practices. Let no man despise thee:* behave in such a manner as may command respect; and if any notwithstanding presume to treat thee or thy ministry with contempt, it shall be at their peril.

C H A P. III.

BECAUSE the Judaizers affirmed, that no obedience was due from the worshippers of the true God to magistrates who were idolaters, and because, by that doctrine, they made not only many Jewish, but Gentile professors, bad subjects, and exposed them to be punished as evil doers, (see Rom. xiii.) the apostle commanded Titus to inculcate frequently on the Cretans, to obey the magistrates under whose protection they lived, although they were idolaters, ver. 1.—and not to speak evil of any one, on account of his nation or religion, or on any other account, except in necessary defence of truth and religion, ver. 2.—Because, said the apostle, even we of the Jewish nation, who now believe the gospel, were formerly in behaviour as bad as the heathens; being foolish, disobedient, &c. ver. 3.—and through the unmerited mercy of God have been delivered from our former sinful state, by the bath of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, ver. 4, 5, 6.—that being rescued from ignorance and wickedness by grace, we might become heirs of eternal life, ver. 7.—Next the apostle ordered Titus strongly to affirm, that every one who hath believed on God, is bound to practise good works, ver. 8.—Also he commanded him in his discourses, to avoid the foolish questions and genealogies

2^c To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, ^d but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For^e we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4^f But after that the kindness and love of^g God our Saviour toward man appeared,

which the false teachers insisted on, ver. 9.—and to admonish heretical teachers, both concerning their doctrine and their practice: and after a first and second admonition, if they did not amend, to cast them out of the church, ver. 11.—Withal, because the Cretans were disposed to be idle, Titus was to enjoin them to follow some honest occupation, whereby they might both maintain themselves, and do works of charity to the afflicted, ver. 14.—The apostle concluded his epistle with salutations; and with a benediction to all in Crete, who acknowledged his apostolical authority, ver. 15.

Ver. 1.] The Jews were of a very seditious, rebellious spirit about the time when this epistle was written; and it was with great reluctance that they obeyed any civil governors, but those of their own nation. The Judaizing Christians were too apt to imitate them, and to retain this factious spirit; which they would have infused into the Gentile Christians, and have taught them to have had as sovereign a contempt for men of other religions, as they had themselves. In opposition to which, Titus was to teach the Christians to pay the most strict obedience to their civil governors, and to be of a benign spirit to all men; even to men of different nations, sects, and religion: and to enforce this, St. Paul is thought to have urged his own example, ver. 3. He had been formerly as furious a persecutor of the Christians, and as bigotted a Jew, as any of the unbelieving Jews or Judaizing Christians could be; but since he had through grace embraced Christianity in its life and power, his charity was enlarged, and he saw the reasonableness, the necessity of loving, and doing good to all men, of whatever faith or profession. Titus was to be perpetually inculcating upon the Christians this temper and behaviour, as infinitely preferable to a regard for Jewish genealogies, traditions, and ceremonies: and he was not only to teach this himself, but was also informed, that such of the Jewish Christians as made factions by propagating their impositions, were heretics; and as such the Christians were to regard them, and to hold no familiar society with them. See 1 Tim. ii. 1—4. Rom. xiii. 1, 7.

Ver. 2. To speak evil, &c.] Calumniate no man; not even your Pagan or Jewish neighbour, says good Dr. Barrow, however enormous in their lives, or cruel in their behaviour to you.

5 ^h Not by works of righteousness which we have done, ⁱ but according to his mercy he saved us, by the ^k washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 ^l Which he shed on us ^{*} abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being ^m justified by his grace, we should be made ⁿ heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 ^o *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, ^p that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

9 But ^q avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an ^r heretic after the first

^h Rom. 3. 20, 28. & 9. 11, 16. & 11. 6. Gal. 2. 16, 19—21. Eph. 2. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 9. ⁱ Ver. 4. Eph. 1. 4. & 2. 4, 7, 8. Rom. 5. 20, 21. & 4. 6. Acts, 15. 11. ^k John, 3. 3, 5. Ezek. 36. 25—27. Eph. 5. 25, 26. ^l If. 44. 3. Joel, 2. 28. Ezek. 36. 25, 27. Acts, 2. 25. & 10. 45. John, 7. 37. & 6. 45. & 1. 16. Rom. 5. 5. ^m Gr. *ruhy*. ⁿ Rom. 3. 24, 28. & 4. 6. & 5. 1, 15—21. & 11. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Rev. 1. 5. Eph. 1. 6, 7. & 2. 7. Col. 1. 14. ^o Rom. 8. 17, 23, 24. Gal. 3. 29. Heb. 1. 14. James, 2. 5. 1 Pet. 1. 4. Ch. 1. 2. ^p 1 Tim. 1. 15. & 3. 1. & 4. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Prov. 22. 20. ^q Ver. 4. Ch. 2. 14. Eph. 2. 10. Phil. 4. 8. & 2. 15, 16. & 1. 11, 27. Gal. 5. 6, 22, 23, 24. Rom. vi. xii—xiv. Eph. iv—vi. Col. iii. Luke, 1. 74, 75. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Pl. 19. 11. If. 3. 10. ^r 1 Tim. 1. 4, 6, 7. & 4. 7. & 5. 3—5, 20. 2 Tim. 2. 14, 23. Ch. 1. 10, 14. 2 Pet. 1. 16. Col. 2. 4, 8, 18—23. 1 Cor. 8. 1. & 13. 2. ^s Mat. 18. 17. Rom. 16. 17. 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 2 John, 10. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 13. 1 Tim. 1. 20. Gal. 1. 8, 9. & 5. 12.

Ver. 3. For we ourselves also] That St. Paul, like many other authors, frequently speaks of himself in the first person plural, is well known to all who have attended to his phraseology, and to the course of these annotations. Nor is there any reason in the world, why St. Paul should exclude himself from the number of those, who were by nature sinners; on the contrary, he is at all times ready to avow the dark and sinful state he was in, before his conversion by the grace of Christ. We may observe, that the words rendered *lusts* and *pleasures*, not only signify grosser vices, but an intense criminal desire after any thing: in which view they more strongly mark out St. Paul's character before his conversion. He had been guilty of following his own pleasure or inclination, and gratifying his intense desires in persecuting Christians, for which he reckoned himself as the greatest of sinners before his conversion, and the least of all saints after his conversion.

Ver. 4. God our Saviour] It is observable, that God *the Father* is here called *our Saviour*; to intimate that it was his paternal love to us, which engaged him to appoint his Son to redeem us, and to perform for us all those important offices, by which he accomplishes the salvation of the faithful.

Ver. 5. Not by works of righteousness, &c.] “For it was not by any works of righteousness which we ourselves had done; for any acts of obedience, whether to ceremonial or moral precepts, by which we had made ourselves worthy of his favourable regard; but according to his own mercy, that he saved us from condemnation and ruin, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; which, by its purifying influence, operates to turn to God all that will yield to be saved by grace, and brings them into the number of his children, and afterwards advances the happy work in all that persevere in cleaving to him, by improving them more and more in the divine life and image.”

Ver. 6, 7. Which he shed on us abundantly, &c.] “Even by that Spirit which he poured out upon us richly and abundantly, in his various gifts and graces, by Jesus Christ our Saviour, by virtue of whose intercession it has been imparted to the children of men; that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs of the

“most valuable blessings, according to the hope of eternal life, which as the gift of that grace he has exhibited to our believing views, as the great and noble object of our pursuit.”

Ver. 8. This is a faithful saying, &c.] “But though believers are put into a state of justification, merely by grace, or through the divine favour, this is a matter of certain truth and great importance; and, concerning these things, I order that you strenuously insist upon it, that they who have believed in God, as he has revealed himself in the gospel of his Son, should be very careful to stand up for good works:”—that is, all those actions which embrace or include our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves. These good and excellent works the Christians were to maintain and stand up for; to defend them, as it were, from whatever might tend to make themselves remiss in the performance of them. Nothing can more exactly suit the connection: the Judaizers made no account of good works; they represented them as of little or no moment, compared with believing, as they said, about Jewish fables, or the endless genealogies, or generations of the Eons; the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, and its being obligatory upon the Gentiles, as well as Jewish Christians. (See ver. 9.) Hence the apostle, in contradiction to such vain and unprofitable jargon, enjoins Titus, ch. ii. 1, &c. to teach things which became sound doctrine; namely, that all persons should practise good works; (see also ver. 14.) And here again he strongly inculcates the same important truths. It deserves great regard, that St. Paul accounted this a matter of the utmost moment; and ordered Titus not to urge good works now and then, or as a thing by the bye; but to be constantly, or with all his might, affirming, that Christians ought to maintain good works. See on ch. ii. 14. Good works are here represented as amiable and excellent in themselves, and greatly useful and profitable unto mankind; so they are called *κατα εργα, beautiful works*. These, therefore, are things which the ministers of Christ are to affirm constantly, or strenuously.

Ver. 10. A man that is an heretic, &c.] The word *Αἰρεσις*, from the verb *αἰρεω*, to choose, signifies a form or mode of religious worship, discipline or opinion, which any one chooses, follows, and professes; or, the persons who

and second admonition reject ;

11 Knowing that he that is such ' is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or ' Tychicus, ' be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis : for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and ' Apollos

¹ 1 Tim. 1. 19. & 4. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 8. Heb. 10. 26. John, 3. 20. Mat. 22. 35. Luke, 7. 30. & 12. 47. Eph. 6. 21. ² See Acts, 20. 4. 2 Tim. 4. 12. ³ 2 Tim. 4. 9, 21. ⁴ Acts, 18. 24. 1 Cor. 1. 12. 3 John, 6. ⁵ Or profess honest trades. 1 Thess. 2. 9. Eph. 4. 28. 2 Thess. 3. 8. 1 Cor. 4. 12. ⁶ Ver. 8. Ch. 2. 14. Phil. 1. 11. & 4. 17. 2 Pet. 1. 8. ⁷ 1 Thess. 5. 26, 28. Col. 4. 15, 18. Phil. 4. 21—23. Eph. 6. 23, 24. Gal. 6. 18. 2 Cor. 13. 12—14. 1 Cor. 16. 20—23. Rom. xvi.

follow such form or mode. See Acts, v. 17. xv. 5. xxiv. 5. xxvi. 5. xxviii. 22. This word seems to be used by St. Peter in the sense of *electing*, espousing, or defending some fundamental error, concerning Christian doctrine, whether of faith or practice. 2 Pet. ii. 1. "I define *heresy*, says Dr. Waterland, not merely a mistake of judgment, though in fundamentals, but *espousing* such erroneous judgment : either teaching or disseminating it, or openly supporting or assisting those who do." Hence *αἰρετικὸς*, a heretic, is a man who chooses and espouses some fundamental error concerning the Christian doctrine ; "Not every one that mistakes in judgment,—though in matters of great importance, in points fundamental ;—but he who openly espouses such fundamental errors, I take to be a heretic, says Dr. Waterland, in the true and full scripture notion of the word ;"—a definition, very agreeable to that excellent saying of St. Austin, *Errare possum, hereticus esse nolo*, "I may err, but I am not willing to be a heretic." St. Paul orders Timothy, after the first and second admonition, to reject such a person, that is, to declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as a member of the church, and to treat him as such—to refuse all kind of notice or concern in respect to him ; knowing that he who is such, that is, continues such after two admonitions, is now without excuse ;—*αὐτοῦ ἀναξαρτὸς* ;—and, as it were, passes sentence upon himself ; either as voluntarily cutting himself off from the church by an open revolt, or, as rendering himself incapable of the privileges and blessings belonging to it, by renouncing its faith : which, in a just construction, is judging or declaring himself unworthy of the blessings tendered. See Waterland's "Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," p. 114—120. Dr. Benson observes well, that St. Paul does not say to Timothy, "After the first and second admonition, imprison the heretic ; seize him with artful, sly, insinuating examinations ; or put him to the torture to make him confess ; and then, if he will not recant, roast him in a slow and lingering fire, as a heretic convict." such rules never proceeded from the apostles of our Lord, but from the synagogue of Satan ; who themselves answer to the apostolic description of *heretics*, while many of those whom they condemn as heretics, have the marks of being the faithful followers of Christ, and members of his true church. "Exciting the rage of the populace, or awakening the zeal of the civil magistrate ; inflicting bodily

2†

on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

14 And let our's also learn to ' maintain good works for necessary uses, ' that they be not unfruitful.

15 ' All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

"pains and penalties, confiscating possessions, or using men's names and persons ill, because of their thinking for themselves, or choosing to worship God according to their own consciences,—has never yet been found the way to enlighten men's understandings, or to make them better Christians, or honest men."

Ver. 12.] The apostle proceeds to order Titus to come to him, when the person should arrive, whom he would send to release him ; and in the mean time to send Zenas and Apollos to him ; but, as full of the grand subject of the epistle, he bids Titus put the Gentile Christians in Crete upon providing what was proper for their journey, as a proof of the influence which true Christianity had upon them ; and which was to be shewn, not by idle notions, or empty ceremonies, but by works substantially beneficial and good, ver. 12. to the end. There were towns in several countries, of the name of *Nicopolis* ; but this was most probably in Epirus. It was called *Nicopolis*, or "the city of victory," because it was built in memory of the victory which Augustus obtained over Anthony at Actium. It appears from the last clause of this verse, that St. Paul was now at liberty ; and from all circumstances it seems most probable that this epistle was written between his first and second imprisonment.

Ver. 13. Bring Zenas, &c.] St. Paul, most likely, knew that Zenas and Apollos were to pass through, or touch upon the island ; and therefore he ordered Titus, *συντάλας περίμεναι*, to conduct them along with all care ; or to furnish them with provisions, to help them to proceed comfortably in their journey. See 3 John, ver. 6. As the word *νομικὸς* is the word made use of, Matth. xxii. 35. and as Zenas is here mentioned with Apollos, it seems more probable that he was a Jewish, than a Roman lawyer.

Ver. 14. And let our's also learn, &c.] "Let our brethren learn (as I said ver. 8.) to be foremost in the practice of good works upon needful occasions ; particularly to assist such Christian brethren as travel about to preach the pure gospel of Christ ; that they may not be unfruitful, and act as if they had learned nothing but barren speculations from that religion, which is so well calculated to inspire and animate every sentiment of benevolence and beneficence."

Ver. 15. Grace be with you all. Amen.] This salutation shews, that though the epistle was directed and sent to Titus,

Titus, it was intended for the benefit of *all* the true Christians in Crete.

Inferences.—The remembrance of the *irregularities* with which we ourselves were once chargeable, and of that sinful and miserable state in which we once were, should make us candid to others, and silence our severe censures against them, ch. iii. 2. Let the kindness, the infinite *philanthropy* of God, be daily celebrated and adored by us; of God, who saves the faithful by his own rich and overflowing mercy; who hath justified us by his free grace in Christ, and thereby made us heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. Nor let us ever forget how much we are indebted to the regenerating and renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, shed abroad upon us richly by Jesus Christ our Saviour. May it wash and purify our souls more and more from every stain of sin, and inspire us with a pious ardour to honour our profession by a holy life! having professed our belief in God, may we carefully practice all the graces and virtues of the Christian character; for *these things are indeed good and profitable to men*:—guarding at the same time against all those airy curiosities, and abstruse speculations, which on the contrary are *unprofitable and vain*.

How greatly is it to be wished, that all the churches of Christ were delivered from such factious members and teachers, as would depart from the infallible rule of truth laid down in the word of God, and *subvert the faith once delivered to the saints*;—introducing, instead of it, the *doctrines of men*, and teaching things which tend to alienate the minds of Christians from the gospel, and from each other, in order to set up their own authority, and promote a private secular interest! we ought undoubtedly to be cautious how we pass such a censure on particular persons, without clear and evident proof; but when such proof arises, and the persons in question appear to be the *turbulent and pernicious heretics* that St. Paul describes, ver. 10. it were to be wished that they might always meet with the treatment which *he* recommends. They ought first to be plainly and seriously *admonished*; and if repeated admonitions are rejected, it is the duty of the wiser and sounder parts of Christian churches to *expel* them; that so they may be less capable of doing mischief, and that the *gangrene* of such pernicious principles may not spread, to the disgrace and ruin of the churches to which they belong.

But, let us ever remember, *this* is all the remedy which the sacred scriptures suggest or furnish out to us: and they who, to the *solemn censure* of disturbed and injured churches, add any *corporal severities*, or *civil penalties* whatsoever,—or take up weapons which Christ has never put into their hands, may very probably do more mischief in the church and in the world, than the most erroneous of those against whom they would arm their terrors*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle proceeds,

1. To direct Titus respecting the obedience which he must inculcate as due to the civil magistrate. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers*, under whatever government they live; *to obey magistrates with loyalty and willing submission*; *to be ready to every good work*, ren-

dering to all degrees of men the duty owing to them: *to speak evil of* or calumniate *no man*, not reviling the magistrates, nor raising any slanderous report of any human being; *to be no brawlers*, disturbing the peace of society, turbulent and quarrelsome; *but gentle* in temper and manners, *showing all meekness unto all men*, however perverse or provoking their conduct may be toward us.

2. He suggests the most cogent reasons to enforce his exhortation.

[1.] The consideration of their former sinful state: and the more deeply we are sensible of our own vileness, the more we shall feel ourselves obliged to bear with others. *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish*, as our opposers now are, ignorant of divine truth, and under the darkness of our fallen minds; *disobedient* in spirit and practice, refusing to hear and obey the dictates of God's word; *deceived*, and wandering out of the way, under the influence of a corrupted heart, and the wiles of Satan; *servings divers lusts and pleasures*: perfect slaves to our sensual appetites, the basest of all servitude; *living in malice and envy*; possessed and governed by these diabolical passions; regarding others, who were most prosperous in the world, with a malignant eye; and pleased with any miseries which befel them; *hateful* to God because of these abominations; and *hating one another*, with implacable resentment. What a fearful description! yet in this glass may every enlightened sinner discover his own features by nature, and own the humbling resemblance; for as face answereth face, so does the heart of one natural man to another.

[2.] The kindness and love of God to them in their miserable estate, should engage them to shew the like pity and compassion toward others. *But after that*, vile as we were, *the kindness and love of God our Saviour*, notwithstanding, *toward man appeared*, most illustriously displayed in his glorious gospel; *not by works of righteousness which we had done*, for all our works were the very reverse, and merited only wrath to the uttermost; *but according to his mercy*, in the most astonishing manner extended to the miserable and the desperate, *he hath saved us freely*, by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, who is the glorious agent of the divine change wrought in regeneration; *cleansing our souls from the power of corruption*, quickening us to a life of grace and holiness, maintaining and carrying it on in the faithful unto the perfect day; *which Holy Ghost he shed on us abundantly*, both in his gifts and graces, *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*, the purchaser of every blessing for his faithful people, and the dispenser of this Spirit unto them; *that being justified by his grace*, and through faith of the operation of God brought into a state of pardon and reconciliation, *we should be made heirs of glory according to the hope of eternal life*, which he hath given us in that adored Redeemer, who hath obtained a complete salvation for every faithful saint, not only from all the miseries of sin, but unto all the blessedness of eternity. *Note*; (1.) The salvation of the sinner is entirely of grace; pardon, holiness, and hope of life eternal, are all the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and will be all realized to every persevering believer. (2.) Though we are justified freely, not for any righteousness of our own, but of God's mere favour; yet

* See Calmet, Benson, Michaelis, Lardner, Grotius, Hammond, Doddridge, Bentley, Lightfoot, Raphelius, Wetstein, Parkhurst, Spanheim, Erasmus, Beza, Bishop Pocock, Elmer, Plutarch, Morris, Wolfius, Suicer, Locke, Bishop Sherlock, Barrow, Taylor, L'Enfant, Cradock, and Heylin.

do we from that moment become different men, and new creatures, by the Spirit of our God renewed in our minds, and pressing after the glory which is prepared for the righteous.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Inculcates the doctrine which Titus must preach.

This is a faithful saying, all that I have above declared of the duties incumbent on believers, the misery from which they have been redeemed, and the amazing grace of which they have been made partakers, is to be steadfastly believed and embraced: *and these things I will that thou affirm constantly*; often insisting upon them in the course of thy ministry, to the end, *that they which have believed in God*, to the present salvation of their souls, *might be careful to maintain good works*; to excel and lead the way to others (*προσκαθαί*), with all diligence and zeal improving every opportunity which offers to be useful. *These things are good and profitable unto men*; the doctrines here enforced, have the most immediate tendency to advance the benefit of mankind, and promote their present and eternal good. *Note*; The doctrine of justification by grace through faith, is so far from destroying the obligation of good works, that it is the only real and effectual principle which can make us careful to maintain them.

2. He cautions him what to shun. *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law*, which the Judaizing teachers affect, to the great prejudice of Christianity; *for they are unprofitable and vain*; tending to no one useful purpose, but sowing discord in the church, and corrupting the simplicity of the gospel.

3. *A man that is an heretic*, who openly professes and maintains doctrines subversive of the fundamental articles of faith, *after the first and second admonition reject*; if he continue obstinate in his errors, remove him from your communion, and acknowledge him no longer as a brother: *knowing that he that is such, is subverted, apostate from Christ, the only foundation*; and *sinneth wilfully, being condemned of himself*; openly broaching his sentiments, departing from the confession of the true faith, which he formerly made, and avowedly separating himself from the church of God. *Note*; They who refuse to be reclaimed from important errors by repeated admonition, must be cut off from the body of the visible church by excommunication.

3dly, We have,

1. Some particular directions given to Titus.

2. We have a sacred command. *And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*, but adorn the profession which they make, diligent in their several employments, and liberal according to their ability, in the maintenance of their ministers, or in assisting any of their brethren who may need their support.

2. He concludes with salutations and his apostolic benediction. *All that are with me, salute thee affectionately. Greet them that love us in the faith, and are one in sentiment and heart with us. Grace be with you all*, in its most abundant fruits and richest manifestations, *Amen!* So prays your faithful friend.

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
PHILEMON.

P R E F A C E.

PHILEMON seems to have been a substantial man at Colosse, who had a spacious house, in which part of the Christian church assembled, and in which travelling Christians were entertained. The want of public inns among the ancients, made this hospitality needful, and it was particularly enjoined upon Christians to receive one another hospitably; but, as every individual was not in a condition to entertain Christian strangers, the churches seem to have appointed one or more of their principal members for this purpose; Rom. xvi. 2. This was the office of deacons; so that Philemon had an office in the church, and indeed he is by some of the ancients entitled, "Bishop of Colosse." Whatever his ministerial office was, St. Paul calls him his fellow-labourer. His son Archippus, to whom this Epistle is also addressed, had just before been deacon in the church of Colosse, Col. iv. 17. He is accordingly mentioned with honour by St. Paul, who not only styles him his fellow-labourer, like his father, but also his fellow-soldier. Philemon is thought to have been one of St. Paul's first-fruits of the church of Ephesus, and not to have been converted, like the rest, by the instrumentality of Epaphras, but by that of St. Paul himself; having probably come to Ephesus while St. Paul was there, ver. 19. This Epistle was written from Rome at nearly the same time with the Epistles to the Colossians, Philippians, &c. about the year 61 or 62. The occasion of it was this: Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed him, and fled to Rome; there St. Paul, meeting with him, became the means of his genuine conversion to Christianity; and having kept him some time, to be satisfied of the reality of his profession, sends him back to his master with this letter; which has always been admired for its delicacy of sentiment and masterly address, and may be considered as a fine model of epistolary writing. Nothing gives one a better idea of a man's character, than his letters to his private friends; and in this letter we have the picture of a wise and good man, and a zealous, generous friend; who knew how to condescend to men of low estate, and promote their temporal and spiritual welfare. But there is no reason for looking at this as a mere private letter; for it was all written with the apostle's own hand, (ver. 19.) which was much more than that which he called the token in all his epistles, 2 Theff. iii. 17. It has been universally received by the church of Christ as a part of the sacred canon. Whoever carefully reads it, will discern a great number of the doctrines and precepts of Christianity expressed or insinuated: for instance, first, in the religious view, or upon a spiritual account, all Christians are upon a level: Onesimus the slave, upon becoming a Christian, is the apostle's dear son, and Philemon's brother. Secondly, Christianity makes no alteration in men's civil affairs. Onesimus's temporal estate and condition was still the same. Thirdly,

Thirdly, *We should love, and do good unto all men; we should not contemn persons of low estate, nor disdain to help the meanest slave, when it is in our power.* Fourthly, *We should not utterly despair of those who are wicked, but should use our best endeavours to reclaim them: though Onesimus had wronged his master, and run away from him, the apostle attempted his conversion, among others, and succeeded under the blessing of God.* Fifthly, *Restitution is due, where an injury has been done, unless the injured party freely forgive; ver. 18.* Sixthly, *We should be grateful to our benefactors: this St Paul touches upon very delicately; ver. 19.* Seventhly, *We should forgive the penitent, and be heartily reconciled to them.* Eighthly, *The apostle's example teaches us, to do all we can to make up quarrels and differences, and reconcile those who are at variance.* Ninthly, *A wise man chooses sometimes to address in a soft and obliging manner, even in cases where there is an authority to command: ver. 8, 9.* Tenthly, *The bishops and pastors of the Christian church, and all teachers of religion, have here the most animating example set before them, to induce them to have a most tender regard to the souls of men, of all ranks and conditions; and to endeavour to convert a slave, as well as the rich, and great, and honourable of the earth. He who disdained not to teach a slave, a fugitive, and a thief, but preached the doctrine of salvation to him, and took pains with him, till he had restored him to his master an honest worthy man, and, what was infinitely more, had instrumentally led him into a state of adoption among the children of God.—How disinterested must he have been?—To whom would not he condescend?—Or whose salvation and happiness would he not endeavour to promote?—Would to God there was the same spirit in all the teachers of Christianity, at all times, and in all places!* Eleventhly, *Here is a most glorious proof of the good effects of Christianity, where it is rightly understood, and sincerely embraced: it transforms a worthless slave and thief, into a holy, pious, virtuous, amiable, and useful man; makes him not only happier and better in himself, but a better servant, and better in all relations and circumstances whatsoever. See on ver. 25. and the Inferences.*

PAUL ^a, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer,
 2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and ^b Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to ^c the church in thy house:
 3 ^d Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

^a Acts, 27. 1. & 28. 16, 17. Eph. 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. Phil. 1. 7, 13. Col. 4. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 8. Ver. 9. ^b Col. 4. 7. Phil. 2. 25. ^c Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16. 19. Col. 4. 15. ^d Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. & 13. 14. Gal. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. 1 Thess. 1. 1. 2 Thess. 1. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. Titus, 1. 4.

Ver. 1. Paul, a prisoner, &c.] St. Paul intimates, ver. 8, 9. that he chose to lay aside all his apostolic authority, and to beg it as a favour of Philemon to be reconciled to Onesimus; and, in order to touch and melt the heart of Philemon, he begins with styling himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ. This affable and condescending manner of address must be owned to be more agreeable and engaging than that of authority and command. The apostle might here call Timothy *the brother*, and not his *son*, as he does elsewhere, to add weight and dignity to his character, and thereby render his name of more moment in behalf of Onesimus. Whoever contributed any way towards helping forward the gospel, were called the apostle's *fellow-labourers*. See ver. 24.

Ver. 2. Apphia,] This was a Roman name. St. Paul writes it *Apphia*, after the Hebrew manner; the Romans

wrote it *Appia*. She is conjectured by some of the fathers, and asserted by others, to have been the *wife* of Philemon; and as she is mentioned next to Philemon, and before *Archippus*, who was a minister in the church at Colosse, the conjecture seems not improbable. By the apostle's styling her *sister* (according to the several ancient copies and versions,) or *the beloved*, according to the common reading, she appears to have been a Christian; and it is most likely that she was addressed, in order to engage her interest in behalf of Onesimus, with a view to whose affair the whole Epistle was evidently written, in its primary sense. *Archippus* has been generally thought to be Philemon's *son*; probably he was one of St. Paul's assistants, who had some gifts of the Spirit, and had devoted himself very much to the work of the ministry in Colosse. *They* might have been called *fellow-soldiers* with the apostles, who with them fought *the*

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

^c Rom. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 3. Col. 1. 3. 1 Thess. 1. 2. 2 Thess. 1. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 3. ^f Eph. 1. 15. Col. 1. 4. 1 Thess. 1. 3. 2 Thess. 1. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 5. ^e Heb. 13. 16. & 6. 10. & 10. 24. Rom. 12. 13. 2 Cor. 8. 4. & 9. 13. Phil. 4. 14, 15. & 1. 5, 9. Titus, 2. 24. ^h 2 Cor. 7. 4, 13. 1 Th. 3. 7. with 1 Cor. 16. 13. 2 Tim. 1. 16. ⁱ 1 Thess. 2. 6. ^k 2 Cor. 15. 8. ^l Ver. 1, 10.

the good fight of faith; for the Christian life is a warfare: but the apostle seems to have used the phrase for "such as in those times of persecution took pains to preach and spread the Christian religion," Philip. ii. 25. 1 Tim. i. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. By the church in Philemon's house, the apostle seems to have meant his whole family, who were Christians, and united together in Christ's worship. See Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

Ver. 4.] The apostle does not proceed immediately to the main subject of the Epistle; but, after the usual salutations, comes nearer to the point; with the most admirable address thanking God that Philemon had been as generous and kind already, and had done as much in other instances, as he was now going to request of him. He urges the benevolent and good man by his own past example; as if he had said, "Only continue to act like yourself, and then you will do all that I am now going to desire of you." This was certainly a most grateful and insinuating way of pointing out to Philemon his duty, and the most proper and beautiful introduction to this particular request: ver. 4—7.

Ver. 5. Hearing of thy love and faith.] "Hearing, with greater pleasure than I can express, of the steady faith which thou hast, and always maintainest, toward the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great object to which our faith as Christians is directed, and of thy ardent love to all the saints, who are the excellent of the earth, and the most deserving of our esteem and affection." The words of this verse stand in the original as they are placed in our version; and many instances of such a transposition are produced by Dr. Whitby, in his learned note on this place; but Mr. Blackwall justly observes, that our language does not admit of the like, and therefore proposes the rendering which we have followed in our paraphrase above.

Ver. 6. That the communication of thy faith, &c.] "It is therefore matter of my most fervent prayer, that these promising openings may be abundantly answered; and that thy communion with us in the faith of our blessed Redeemer, the advantages of which thou dost now so happily share, may be more and more apparently efficacious, in extorting from all that behold it, the due acknowledgment of every good and valuable thing which is in you all towards Christ Jesus, and all those whom he is pleased to own and favour."

Ver. 8.] After this preparation, the apostle comes to

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the main subject of his Epistle; which was, to request Philemon to take Onesimus into his favour again. The main argument which he urges is, that he, through divine grace, had converted Onesimus to genuine Christianity, who would therefore prove another sort of servant than he had formerly been: such softness of expression, warmth of affection, and elegance of address, are here made use of, as deserve the highest approbation.

Ver. 9. Paul the aged.] It is generally thought that this Epistle was written about the year of Christ 62; and if we suppose St. Paul to have been twenty-four years old when Stephen was stoned, which is consistent with his being called a young man;—that being about the year 34, (for we have not data sufficient absolutely to determine the exact time,) he would be now fifty-two; and considering how much his constitution would probably be impaired by his fatigues and sufferings, before that time he might properly enough call himself *ὑπερβύτης*,—one advanced in age, though not an old man. Let us now attend a little to the force of the argument contained in the present verse. It is as if the apostle had said, "I am become a humble petitioner;—and consider with yourself who it is that begs this favour: It is Paul;—a name which once sounded pleasing in your ears, and a person for whom you professed a high regard; that very person, who has travelled many a hundred miles by sea and by land, through numberless difficulties, and much ill treatment for his attempts to make men wise, holy, and good through the grace of God in Jesus Christ: to whom you, Philemon, as well as many thousands, owe instrumentally the salvation of their souls, and whose very name might carry in it the force of many arguments: the person who now humbly petitions you, is one who might address you in a different manner: he has been illuminated with abundance of revelations from Heaven, favoured with the power of working numerous, great, and beneficial miracles, and by the laying on of his hands is, under the Spirit of God, able to communicate spiritual gifts or miraculous powers unto others. He has been sent out among the nations, has baffled the wisdom of the world, has prevailed against the eloquence of the orators, and has overturned the schemes of the heathen philosophers, and Jewish scribes and rabbies: he has, through grace, made numerous converts, both among Jews and Gentiles; turning men from ignorance, superstition, idolatry,

4 M

try,

10 I beseech thee for my son ^m Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time past was to thee ⁿ unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore ^o receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me,

that ^p in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should ^q not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For ^r perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

^m Col. 4. 9. 1 Cor. 4. 15. Gal. 4. 19.
6. 1, 2. Mat. 18. 15, 21, 22, 35.
Rom. 8. 28. 2 Cor. 4. 17.

ⁿ Ver. 18, 16. Perhaps lazy and thievish.
1 Cor. 16. 17. Phil. 2. 30.

^o Luke, 15. 20. Phil. 1. 8. Rom. 13. 8—10. Gal.
1. 10. 2 Cor. 9. 7. 1 Chron. 28. 9. & 29. 9. Gen. 45. 5. & 50. 20.

“try, and vice, to knowledge, holiness, piety, virtue, and happiness. He bears a commission of a sublime nature, and of the utmost importance to the welfare of mankind; and he carries his credentials along with him: he is an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech you by him; and he prays you, in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to Onesimus again. Permit me also to add another circumstance, which with all humane persons, and more especially with all genuine Christians, must have great weight: the aged ambassador is now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I have been almost two years in the custody of a soldier, and often chained to him; confined to a disagreeable companion, and very much in his power, and at his mercy. Inquire now at Rome for the aged ambassador of Jesus Christ,—you will find him in custody, like a criminal; though really wearing that chain only for preaching the gospel, especially among you Gentiles. And, finally, consider him whose ambassador and prisoner I am; my commission is from a Person of highest dignity, for whose sake I can endure a prison, and joyfully wear this chain; and I am persuaded that your regard to him is not small, nor will you suffer an ambassador and prisoner of Christ to petition in vain.” Almost every word carries in it the force of an argument; Philemon's love to the person of St. Paul,—his regard for his high office and dignity, as the aged ambassador of Christ,—his love and cheerful obedience to the Lord Jesus himself, are all touched upon or intimated in this short sentence.

Ver. 10. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus.] The order of the original words is this: *I entreat thee for a son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds,—Onesimus.* Thus the mind is kept in an agreeable suspense; and it must have affected Philemon in such a manner, as to render it impossible for him to withstand an entreaty proposed with so much delicacy and modesty.

Ver. 11. To thee unprofitable, but now profitable, &c.] The word *Onesimus* is generally known to signify *profitable*, and *Onesiphorus* is much of the same import: they were names which might perhaps have been given to slaves by way of good omen, expressing expectation that they would bring advantage to their masters; and it is very evident that St. Paul refers to the etymology of the word.

Ver. 12. Mine own bowels:] There are a number of passages in the ancient Greek and Latin writers, where children are called the *bowels* of their parents. Observe how the apostle rises in his expressions: in ver. 10. it was,

my son Onesimus: here it is mine own bowels, or “my most dearly and tenderly beloved son;” and ver. 17. it is, myself, or my very self. There is that in Christianity which so far throws down distinctions, as to set all good men upon a level, without destroying in the least degree that subordination which is essential to the existence of society. A slave, upon becoming a good Christian, is the *son*, the *friend*, the *brother*, the *bowels*, and the very *soul* or *self* of the great apostle of the Gentiles: such an alteration does the gospel make in spirituals, while it destroys not the civil distinctions among men. How graceful is the apostle's manner of condescension! He had before laid aside all his apostolic authority, and entreated Philemon as a suppliant: he now humbles himself to a level with Onesimus, to exalt Onesimus's character, and to intimate the worthiness of the person for whom he was petitioning. With what zeal and ardent affection does he serve his friend! How skilfully and strenuously does he plead his cause! adding motive to motive, though in the most concise and elegant manner, like one who was unwilling to take a denial. Scipio Gentilis has endeavoured to shew, that this Epistle has several of the beauties which shine in Demosthenes and Tully, and which Aristotle and Longinus have admired and celebrated in the ancient poets and orators.

Ver. 13. In the bonds of the gospel:] This is the fourth time that St. Paul has, in this short Epistle, put Philemon in mind of his bonds: he touches them a fifth time, ver. 23. And whoever will be at the pains to compare the places in which he has mentioned those bonds, and other afflictions, will find that he has always done so with an elegant propriety, which marks out his great penetration and judgment. See particularly Acts, xxvi. 29. 2 Cor. xi. 23. Ephes. iv. 1. vi. 20. Philip. i. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 8, 9, &c.

Ver. 14. That thy benefit] That is, “Thy goodness to Onesimus, in readily pardoning him, and treating him kindly for the future.”

Ver. 15. For perhaps he therefore departed] As ver. 13, 14 were thrown in by way of parenthesis, this 15th verse must be considered as connected in sense with ver. 12. As the event had been so happy, St. Paul ascribes it to God: Onesimus designed no such thing by his flight; Philemon did not send him to Rome for that purpose, and St. Paul had not sent to Colosse for him: there was no human contrivance to accomplish so great and good an event; but God, in the course of his wise providence, had so ordered it, that Onesimus's going to Rome had been the happy occasion of his becoming a gracious Christian. Philemon, therefore,

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

* Mat. 23. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 2. Heb. 3. 1. & 13. 1. Col. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, 27. James, 2. 5. 2 Cor. 8. 23. Rev. 1. 9. Heb. 3. 14.
 1 John, 1. 3. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 15, 27. Titus, 1. 4. 1 Tim. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 4. 15. & 9. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 2.

therefore, could not be angry at such an event, unless he had a mind to quarrel with Divine Providence, the progress of the gospel, the conversion and welfare of Onesimus, and what would in the end prove his own advantage. Thus the patriarch Joseph ascribed his going into Egypt to Divine Providence, though it had been occasioned by the treachery and malice of his brethren. See Gen. xlv. 5. l. 20. It may not be improper to attend to the apostle's soft and tender manner of expressing this: *Perhaps*—he speaks a little dubiously: he was unwilling to pry into the secret views of Providence; but the event seemed to justify such a construction. The word Ἐχώρισθῆν we have translated *he departed*;—which is softer than to have said, *he absconded, or ran away*, like a criminal; but the Greek word signifies *he was separated*, which is still softer. That separation had been but of very short continuance; πρὸς ὥραν, *for an hour*; for so short a space, that he could scarcely be accounted a fugitive; especially as he had returned voluntarily, and so much improved. He was separated from his master for an hour, that *he might receive him again for ever*. In which words St. Paul promises, in effect, that Onesimus would not run away any more: he was fully persuaded of the sincerity of his repentance and conversion, and that he would behave well for the time to come. See Exod. xxi. 2. 6. Deut. xv. 17. Lev. xxv. 46.

Ver. 16. Not now as a servant,] The word Δούλον should have been translated *a slave*. Slaves were then bought and sold, like cattle, in the market; and the descendants of such slaves were born slaves: they did not receive wages, nor could they at their pleasure hire themselves to other masters, but were looked upon as their master's goods and possessions. Christianity, as we have often observed, does not alter men's civil obligations or privileges; but it should be observed, that the buying and selling men for slaves is quite another matter, and one which much concerns those who are engaged in it very seriously to consider: and it is with great pleasure, that on this occasion I refer to Mr. Granville Sharpe's humane and benevolent treatise on the subject, entitled, "A Representation of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery."

Ver. 17. If thou count me therefore a partner,] "If, therefore, thou esteemeest me as a friend and companion in Christ." L'Enfant translates it, "I conjure thee, therefore, by all that is common between us, receive him as myself." But the main thought which prevailed in the apostle's mind, seems to have been the participation they both had in the blessings of the gospel, which was the dearest bond of their friendship. The apostle petitions like one quite in earnest. See on ver. 12. Christian friend-

ship is not like the friendships of this world, which are often confederacies in vice, or leagues in pleasure: it is founded on truth, holiness, piety, and extensive virtue, and is therefore the warmest, sincerest, and most durable friendship; not inconsistent, but accompanied with benevolence to all mankind.

Ver. 18. If he hath wronged thee,] Here is a plain confirmation of the doctrine of restitution. Where any person has injured another, he is obliged by the laws of God and conscience to make reparation as far as he is able, even where the law of the land may not compel him to do so; unless the injured party freely forgive him. We may here again observe how cautiously the apostle proceeds: he would not mention the theft or robbery, till he had prepared the way by saying a number of kind things of Onesimus; and then, when he comes to touch upon it, how soft is his language! He does not call it *theft*, or robbery, but *wronging or injuring* him in some respect; or, *owing him some money*; which last is the language in case of a debt honourably contracted. Observe further, the apostle does not absolutely assert, that Onesimus *had done* Philemon any injury, or owed him money; but *if it was so*: and finally we may compare the apostle's circumstances with those of Philemon. The apostle was a *prisoner*; Philemon at full ease and liberty: the apostle poor; Philemon most probably master of a plentiful estate; who was much more likely to have bestowed something upon the apostle, than to have taken any thing from him. But St. Paul would save something out of the kindness and charity of his friends while he was a prisoner, or work with his own hands when he was set at liberty, to raise the money, rather than restitution should not be made, if Philemon should insist upon it: or Philemon might reckon it a discharge, in part at least, of the debt which he owed the apostle as his spiritual father under the grace of God.

Ver. 19. I Paul have written it with mine own hand,] The apostle seems commonly to have dictated, and another person to have wrote down what he said; or to have written a copy, and another transcribed it; (see 2 Theff. iii. 17. 2 Pet. iii. 1.) but he probably wrote all this letter with his own hand; not only to engage to make restitution, if demanded, but to let Philemon see how much he interested himself in this affair. He directly promises to make restitution; but in an oblique manner only insinuates his own claim upon Philemon; whose conversion being one of the happy consequences of St. Paul's ministry, the apostle might justly say that Philemon owed to him *even his own self, or his very soul*. How great an obligation has he expressed in these few words!

20 Yea, brother, * let me have joy of thee in the Lord : refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 † Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging : for ‡ I trust that through your prayers I shall

be given unto you.

23 There salute thee † Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus ;

24 † Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

25 † The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

* Ver. 7, 12. Phil. 2. 17, 28. 1 Theff. 2. 19, 20. & 3. 7—9. 2 Cor. 7. 4—7. † 2 Cor. 7. 6. ‡ Phil. 1. 25. & 2. 24. with Heb. 13. 23. Cor. 1. 11. Acts, 12. 5. James, 5. 16. † Col. 1. 7. & 4. 12. † See Acts, 12. 12. Col. 4. 10, 14. Acts, 19. 20. & 20. 4. & 27. 2. Tim. 4. 10, 11. † 2 Tim. 2. 22. Gal. 6. 18. Rom. 10. 20, 24. † Cor. 16. 23. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Eph. 6. 23, 24. Phil. 4. 23. Col. 4. 18. 2 Theff. 5. 18. 2 Theff. 3. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 21. Titus, 3. 15. Heb. 13. 25. Rev. 22. 21.

Ver. 20. Yea, brother,] The word *Ἀγαπήσειν*, rendered *refresh*, is very emphatical ; it literally signifies to *appease*, or *quiet* ; which strongly intimates the emotion which the apostle felt, through the ardour of his concern for Onesimus, and seems to represent the eagerness of his desire for his re-establishment in Philemon's favour, by the appetite of hunger. Compare ver. 7. where the same word is used, and seems to be referred to here with peculiar beauty and propriety. See Matth. x. 40, &c. and xxv. 40, 45.

Ver. 21. In thy obedience] The word *ὑπακούῃ* frequently signifies *obedience*. Here it must be understood for *compliance*, inasmuch as the apostle had declared, ver. 8, 9. he could have commanded, but chose rather to entreat.

Ver. 22. But withal prepare me, &c.] The apostle's desiring Philemon to prepare him a lodging, shews that he had expectations of being set at liberty, and that then he designed them a visit at Colossæ : it may also lead us to conclude, that this Epistle was written not long before the apostle was set at liberty from his first confinement at Rome, mentioned Acts, xxviii. 30. See also Philip. ii. 24. We have observed before, that Philemon was a rich man ; his house appears to have been a place of entertainment for the Christians who travelled that way ; and therefore St. Paul desired to have a lodging among the rest : but the principal view seems to have been, not only to tell Philemon the agreeable news that he was likely to have such a guest, but to put him upon considering how he could see the apostle's face, if he denied his reasonable and earnest request for Onesimus. See Acts, xii. 5, &c.

Ver. 25. Be with your spirit.] *Ἔμων*, *your*, is in the plural number, and denotes not Philemon's spirit only, but that of his whole family also, or all the persons addressed in the beginning of the Epistle. See 1 Theff. v. 28. We have frequently hinted at the excellence of this Epistle ; which must be allowed to be a master-piece in its kind, considered as a merely human composition ; how much more so as dictated by the infallible Spirit of God ! We could wish the learned reader to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, which seems to have been written on a similar occasion :—lib. ix. ep. 21. which, though penned by one universally allowed to excel in the epistolary stile, and though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged by every impartial reader to be greatly inferior to this animated composition of our apostle.

Inferences.—How amiable is the condescension of the holy apostle ! how charming and delicate his address in this

whole chapter ! St. Paul lays aside the authority, which his office, his age, his suffering, gave him, to address Philemon, as on a foot of equal friendship, choosing rather by love to entreat. Let the example be imitated by those, in superior stations and relations of life ; and let them learn likewise, from the tenderness which such a man expresses about this poor slave, in whom he traced the appearance of a truly Christian temper, to interest themselves in the happiness of those whose rank is far beneath their own ; and learn to make the situation of their servants easy by a kind and friendly treatment. Well may such a care be expected, especially when we can look on such as brethren, beloved in the Lord, and partakers with us in the same Saviour and hope.

Let those, to whom God hath blessed the labours of his faithful ministers, as the means of their conversion, remember it with pleasure, and ascribe it to the riches of divine grace, to which all is originally to be traced ; remembering also, that there is a sense in which they owe even themselves to those who have been honoured as the instruments of bringing them to Christ, without an acquaintance with whom they had lost themselves, and been ruined for ever. Let the kindness which St. Paul expresses for Onesimus, in being willing that his debt to Philemon should be charged to his account, lead us to reflect on our infinite obligations to a gracious Redeemer, who has paid a complete ransom for the sins of the world. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit, to produce those strong impressions of wonder, thankfulness, and love, which ought to fill it on every remembrance of such overflowing and triumphant mercy as our adorable Saviour has manifested to us ! Amen *.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have the preface to this short but beautiful epistle ; and may observe,

1. The persons from whom it comes : from *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ*, now suffering for the gospel cause ; and *Timothy our brother* : and where two such eminent servants of the Saviour concurred in a request, what could be denied them ?

2. The persons to whom it is directed : unto *Philemon our dearly beloved brother in Christ, and fellow-labourer* in the gospel ; and to *our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier*, in the glorious warfare under Christ the Captain of our salvation ; and to *the church in thy house*, his whole family being converts to the faith, or the faithful at Co-

* See Bishop Smallidge, Lardner, Benson, Michaelis, Locke, Whitby, Blackwall, Doddridge, Ward, Bentley, Wetstein, Wolfius, Pricus, Le Clerc, Granville Sharp, Foster, Raphaelus, Stockius, and Theodoret.

loffe assembled there for worship; and, by thus saluting them, he seems desirous to interest them on his behalf, and to solicit their concurrence in the request he was about to make.

3. The salutation. *Grace to you*, in all its comprehensive import; and *peace*, flowing from a sense of pardon and acceptance; and both proceeding from God our Father, from his free and unmerited love, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all spiritual blessings have been purchased, and through whom alone they are bestowed upon us.

4. His thankfulness and prayer. *I thank my God*, whom I ardently love, making mention of thee always in my prayers, whenever I approach a throne of grace, bearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; for which I offer my unceasing praises, and add my fervent prayers, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual, to engage thee to every farther instance of generosity and benevolence, by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you, in, or towards, Christ Jesus, to whom much glory will redound, and many thanks be offered by those who feel the benefit of these gracious dispositions which the Saviour hath implanted, and which manifest themselves in every work and labour of love toward his people for his sake: for we have great joy and consolation in hearing of thy distinguished love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother, who gratefully acknowledge thy extensive charity; and this emboldens me to hope, that in the present instance my petition will be successful.

2dly, The apostle comes to the main business of the Epistle, to entreat for poor Onesimus: and he insinuates a multitude of the most powerful arguments which should engage Philemon to grant his request, and be reconciled to his fugitive servant.

1. He might have used his apostolic authority, but he prefers the entreaty of love. *Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient*, and it would have been your duty in the present case implicitly to obey; yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, waving all superiority, and pleading by that love which Jesus hath shewn to you, and I feel towards you, being such an one as Paul the aged, grown old in the service of our common Lord, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ; therefore I cannot but be assured, whatever would be a comfort to me in these declining years, and serve to make my chain lighter, Philemon, for his Master's sake and mine, will not fail to grant.—Inimitable is the manner in which the apostle introduces the point that he had in view. Having raised every tender sentiment of love and friendship in his bosom, he,

2. Beautifully introduces in the most endearing light the subject of his request. *I beseech thee for my son*, one that now stands in that near relation to me,—and startle not at the name,—strange as it may appear,—the person is no other than Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. So mysterious are the ways of Providence, that though a fugitive from thee, he has led him to my prison, there to receive through my instrumentality the gracious offers of the blessings of the gospel.

3. He suggests the happy change now wrought upon him, which in time past was to thee unprofitable; with penitent shame he has acknowledged his former ill behaviour, over which I would cast a veil of oblivion; but now can

speak of him as a different man, whose spirit and actions I am confident will correspond with his name, and he will be found profitable to thee, if received again into thy service; and, as I have proved by some experience, would have been most useful to me. *Note*; (1.) When we speak of the faults of penitents, it should be with tenderness, not severity. (2.) Wherever divine grace comes, it makes a blessed alteration. (3.) A Christian servant is a truly profitable member in every family.

4. His own love to this signal convert should engage Philemon's to him. *Whom I have sent again back to thy service; thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels*; most tenderly beloved, and for whom I plead with all the affection that I should feel for my own child.

5. He had deprived himself of the very useful service which Onesimus would have afforded him, that he might restore him to his rightful master; referring it to Philemon whether he would send him back again to Rome, or not. *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel*, and done me those kind offices which I know thou wouldst have been happy to have afforded me thyself. *But without thy mind would I do nothing*, nor detain him longer here; that, if it shall please thee to do me the favour of sending him hither again to minister unto me, thy benefit should not appear to be as it were of necessity, but willingly, as a voluntary act of generosity and friendship.

3dly, The apostle proceeds to suggest other arguments to engage Philemon kindly to receive this fugitive.

1. The mercy God had shewed him. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season*; so tenderly does the apostle mention his fault in flying his master's service, since it was now so wonderfully by God's providence over-ruled for good; that thou shouldst receive him for ever, as a servant for life, if thou pleasest; and if you both continue perseveringly to cleave to Jesus, a companion to all eternity: yet not now as a common servant, or slave, but above a servant, even as a brother in the gospel, beloved and dear; especially to me, who have been the happy instrument of his conversion; but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, as a member of thy family, become most faithful and industrious; and in the Lord, as equally a partaker in the blessings of the Redeemer's grace and love. *Note*; (1.) God sometimes amazingly over-rules evil for the production of the greatest good. (2.) Though Christianity maintains in the strictest manner all due subordination of stations, yet real Christian servants will have especial respect and regard shewn them by pious masters, who, as members of the same body, esteem them as their beloved brethren.

2. The communion which subsisted between them, as fellow-heirs of the same kingdom. *If thou count me therefore a partner*, a partaker of the same grace, and an heir of the same glory with thee, receive him as myself, with hearty affection and sincere reconciliation.

3. He becomes Onesimus's surety for any wrong that Philemon had sustained. *If, as I have reason to apprehend, he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it, and engage hereby to make you full satisfaction if demanded. Albeit I do not say to thee how deeply thou art indebted to me, as the instrument under God, and that thou owest unto me, what is infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the world, even thine own soul also.*

4. This

4. This instance of his condescension to his request, would give the apostle singular satisfaction, as a fresh proof of Philemon's fidelity. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord*: on thy own account, as well as for the sake of Onesimus, I ask it, that I may have rejoicing over thee, as a living member of Jesus. *Refresh my bowels in the Lord*, and give me this consolation in my bonds, for that Redeemer's sake in whose name I urge my request. *Note*: (1.) Christians are brethren, and, as such, should delight to serve each other. (2.) It is highly the people's duty to endeavour to comfort their ministers, and to do every thing which may give them joy, and encourage them under their labours and sufferings for the gospel's sake.

5. He concludes with expressing his confidence in Philemon, which laid the strongest obligations upon him not to disappoint his expectations. *Having confidence in thy obedience to our Lord's command to forgive every injury, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I*

say, and shew greater kindness to poor Onesimus than I have requested, exceeding even my desire.

4thly, Having finished his main business, he closes,

1. With the intimation of a visit shortly. *But without prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be delivered from my present confinement, and be given unto you, as a fresh act of favour from God, who, for your further edification, will enable me once more to minister his blessed gospel among you.* *Note*: (1.) Prayer is the effectual means to procure all mercies for ourselves, and for each other. (2.) To have God's ministers spared to labour yet longer among us, is a signal favour.

2. He sends the salutations of many who desired to be kindly remembered to him.

3. He concludes with his usual benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all its happy fruits, and eternally permanent effects, be with your spirit, with thee, and with all that are near and dear to thee, to bless, preserve, and keep you for his everlasting kingdom. Amen.*

THE EPISTLE
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
H E B R E W S.

P R E F A C E.

THE epistle to the Hebrews is not only, like all the other sacred books, the production of the Holy Spirit, but is particularly distinguished as being full of the profoundest wisdom, and treating on the most sublime subjects of religion. The church has always regarded it as the work of St. Paul, and on that account all the ancient manuscripts have put his name to the title of it. The argument, that it does not bear his name, can be no cogent reason against the received opinion of its being his, without discrediting at the same time the universal belief of the church, that the First Epistle of St. John was really written by St. John, whose name it bears, although not inserted by the apostle himself. But, though the name of the apostle be wanting to this epistle, we may boldly say that he himself appears throughout; his stile, his expressions, his mode of reasoning, his usual manner of concluding his letters, decide the point. Besides, several circumstances are interspersed throughout the epistle, which can refer only to him. See Ch. x. 34. and xiii. 23, 24.

It is not quite so easy to discern who are the persons to whom this Epistle is addressed. They are called by the general name of Hebrews, and all we can discover by that title is, that it was not written to the Gentile churches. But, if the Jewish proselytes only are meant, why, in the first place, does St. Paul call them Hebrews, a name which had long been out of use? and secondly, to what Hebrews did he write, and of what city or country? As to the first question, it appears from the 6th chapter of the Acts, ver. 1. and the 3d of the Epistle to the Philippians, ver. 5. that the name of Hebrews was a term of distinction for certain persons and families among the Jews, and had a particular reference to the Hebrew language which those persons or families carefully cultivated; while, on the other hand, it was greatly neglected by those other families which were called Hellenists, or Greek Jews. But the apostle does not use it in that sense here; the title of his epistle is too general to be confined to this sect of Jews only, and the subjects treated have no reference to such a distinction, but are common to all the faithful converted from Judaism, whether Hebrews or Hellenists. The word Hebrews is therefore here, as of old, the name of a nation and a people; Gen. xxxix. 17. xl. 15. But, since the name of Jews was a term for those who held the Jewish religion, except in those places where it is used in direct opposition to the heathen nations, as in Gal. iii. 28. St. Paul, writing to persons no longer Jews in religion, but Christians and believers, does not therefore address his epistles to the Jews, but to the Hebrews, because herein he regards their extraction and origin.

As to the second question, in what country or city resided the Hebrews to whom St. Paul wrote—though this be more difficult to answer, it is at least certain, that the apostle did not mean to address

dress himself generally to all the churches of converted Jews throughout the world; for then he would not have said, as in Ch. xiii. 23. that he hoped to see them with Timothy; neither had he particularly in view the dispersed Jews, to whom St. James and St. Peter wrote their epistles. It is therefore very probable, that St. Paul wrote this epistle to the churches of Judea, and that he wrote it while a prisoner at Rome, since he speaks of his bonds, Ch. x. 34. and it appears from Ch. xiii. 24. that he wrote it from Italy.

The general design of this Epistle was, to confirm the Hebrews in the profession of the gospel, and the experience of its genuine power. This the apostle clearly shews as early as the beginning of the second chapter, and returns to the same subject in Ch. iv. 14. and Ch. vi. 4, 5, &c. And from Ch. x. 23. he speaks scarcely of any thing else; and he calls his letter the word of exhortation, Ch. xiii. 22. to shew that his design was to exhort the Hebrews to persevere in the faith.

In this view the apostle, from the very beginning of the Epistle, lays down the chief foundations of the faith, (Ch. i.) which are, the Divinity of Christ's person; the infinite value of his sacrifice; and his exaltation into heaven, by which he is become the head of the church, and has acquired a dignity which can only consort with a divine personage. These great truths being thus laid down, in order to fill the minds of the Hebrews with sentiments of esteem, respect, and admiration for the gospel, the apostle immediately after, in the second chapter, draws this consequence, which arises from the nature of his subject, that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, and not neglect so great salvation; Ch. ii. 1, 3. And, because it was necessary to fix the attention of the Hebrews somewhat longer upon the glory and majesty of Christ, as contrasted with the ignominy of the cross, which the unbelieving Jews endeavoured to make a ground of distaste to the gospel, the apostle continues to speak throughout the whole of this chapter upon Christ's supreme exaltation; and he adduces a prophecy in the 8th Psalm, shewing that, conformably thereto, Christ's humiliation was to precede his exaltation; and that upon these two circumstances united in the Messiah, his cross and his triumph, his abasement and his exaltation, depends all our happiness.

Having in the first two chapters shewn our blessed Lord in his character of a king, in the third he exhibits him as a prophet; and, comparing him with Moses in a particular which does most honour to that minister of the old dispensation, (under the laws of which the unbelieving Jews would fain bring back those who had been converted,) namely, that of God's confiding to him the entire care of his tabernacle, and the conducting of his people, the apostle raises Christ infinitely above Moses, by shewing that the latter had only borne the name of a servant, and that consequently he only ministered in a house not his own; whereas Christ is placed over the church, the house of the living God, as a Son, not as a servant, for to him it properly belongs, as having built it himself. The remainder of this chapter, and the whole of the following one, are filled with strong exhortations to perseverance; laying before the Hebrews the famous examples of their fathers, who, on account of their rebelling against God in the wilderness, could not themselves enter the land of Canaan; whence the apostle, drawing a similar conclusion, explains to the Hebrews, that if they continued to rebel against God, they could not enter into his rest.

He then (Ch. v.) treats at some length of the priesthood of Christ, to clear away the illusions which the rebellious Jews threw in the way of the converted Jews as to the Levitical priesthood. In the sixth chapter, as if by way of digression, he pictures the wretched state of those, who were once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; (Ch. vi. 4.) and yet had afterwards apostatized. In the seventh chapter, he raises Christ's priesthood above that of Aaron, by comparing it with the priesthood of Melchisedec; and for the subject or text of his discourse, he takes the 110th Psalm, wherein God had said to the Messiah, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, ver. 4. and he proves, 1. that the Messiah's priesthood was an everlasting priesthood; and, 2. that it rested solely

solely in his own person, and did not pass from one to another, like that of Aaron. The rest of this chapter, the 8th, the 9th, and the 10th, to ver. 19. treat in detail upon the Levitical priesthood, shewing so clearly its weakness and imperfection, that nothing can be conceived stronger to the purpose of removing the prejudices of the Jews, and of giving the converted Hebrews, and the church in general in every place and in every age, the most exalted idea of Christ's priesthood and of the efficacy of his sacrifice.

St. Paul, having thus refuted every thing which the rebellious Jews could imagine most specious and imposing in favour of their religion, and against the Christian doctrine, and having fully established the excellence of the gospel, he employs the remainder of this epistle in strengthening the Hebrews against persecution, and exhorting them to patience. He is very earnest on this subject in Ch. x. 19—39. In the 11th Chapter, he collects together the most illustrious examples from scripture, to shew the high value of faith, and the importance of keeping it undefiled. In the 12th Chapter he proceeds to the application of these great examples; and, his zeal being highly animated by a view of so many objects crowding upon his mind, he expresses himself more strongly than ever against apostacy, and shews so emphatically its dreadful consequences, that those only who are infatuated by their passions, can fail to take salutary warning. The last chapter is written with the same views as the preceding; it is a kind of epitome of this excellent Epistle, which the learned may always regard as an inexhaustible source of improvement in doctrine, and the whole church as an inestimable treasure of instruction and consolation.

CHAP. I.

Christ, who is come to us in these last times from the Father, is infinitely preferred above the angels, both in person and office.

[Anno Domini 63.]

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the

fathers by the prophets,

2^b Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, ^c whom he hath appointed heir of all things, ^d by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who, being ^e the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and

^a Numb. 12. 6, 8. Gen. 3. 15. & 6. 3, 13—21. & 8. 15—22. & 9. 1—17. & 12. 1—3. & 13. 14—17. & xv. xvii. xviii. xxi. xxii. & 26. 2—5. & 28. 12—15. & 32. 24—30. & 35. 9—13. & 46. 2—4. & xlix. Exod. iii. to Deut. xxxiii. II. i. to Mal. iv. 1 Pet. 1. 10—12. 2 Pet. 1. 21. ^b Eph. 1. 10. Gal. 4. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 20. John, 1. 14, 17. & 15. 15. Mat. 21. 37. & 11. 2. Ch. 2. 3, 12. & 3. 1, 6. & 8. 6, 8. & 9. 15. Mat. iv. to Acts, i. ^c Pf. 2. 6—8. If. 9. 6, 7. & 42. 1—7. & 49. 1—12. & 53. 10—12. Pl. 22. 27—31. & lxii. xlv. xxi. xcvi—c. cx. cxviii. lxxxix. Mat. 28. 18. Pf. 89. 26—29. Luke, 2. 11. John, 3. 35. & 13. 3. & 16. 15. & 17. 2. Acts, 2. 36. & 10. 36. Rom. 8. 17. 1 Cor. 8. 6. & 15. 27. Phil. 2. 9—11. Col. 1. 15, 18. Ch. 2. 9. & 3. 3. ^d Pf. 33. 6. John, 1. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 6. Eph. 3. 9. Col. 1. 16, 17. ^e Phil. 2. 6. Zech. 13. 7. Col. 1. 15. John, 1. 14. & 14. 9, 10. 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6. If. 9. 6. Rom. 9. 5. & 1. 4.

CHAP. I.

THE apostle begins this most learned epistle, with proposing the subjects of which he is about to discourse; namely, four important facts on which the authority of the gospel, as a revelation from God, is built; and which, if well established, should make unbelievers, whether Jews or Gentiles, renounce their infidelity, and embrace the gospel.

Of these facts, the first is, that the same God, who spake the former revelations to the fathers of the Jewish nation, hath in these last days spoken the gospel to all mankind, ver. 1.—This the apostle mentioned first of all, to shew the agreement of the gospel with the former revelations. For if there were any real opposition between the Jewish and Christian revelations, the authority of one of them, or of both, would be destroyed. Whereas these revelations

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agreeing in all things, they mutually explain and support each other. See chap. iii. 5.—The second fact of which the apostle proposed to discourse is, that the Person by whom God the Father hath spoken the gospel, is his own Son, in the human nature; who is the true effulgence of his glory, and the true and express image of his substance; by whom also he made the worlds, ver. 2, 3.—Hence it follows, that the great author of the gospel is infinitely superior in nature to the angels, by whose ministry God spake the law; that the revelation which he made to mankind, is more perfect than the revelation made to the Jews by angels; and that the dispensation founded thereon, is a better and more permanent dispensation than the law.—The third fact is, that the great Author of the gospel, who made all worlds, is heir or Lord and governor of all. And although, as man, he died, yet, being raised from the dead,

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upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ;

^f Col. 1. 17. Pf. 33. 9. Rev. 4. 11. ^g Ch. 9. 12, 26. & 10. 12. & 12. 2. & 7. 16. Pf. 110. 1. & 89. 27. Eph. 1. 20—22. 1 Pet. 3. 21. & 1. 21. Rev. 5. 6, 12. & 3. 21. Mark, 16. 19. Col. 3. 1. Ch. 4. 14. & 8. 1. Rom. 8. 34.

he had the government of the universe in a peculiar sense conferred upon him in the human nature, ver. 2, 3.—To the faithful, this is a source of the greatest consolation ; because, if the world is governed by *their* Master, he certainly has power to protect and bless them ; and every thing befalling them, will issue in good to them. Besides, being the Judge as well as the ruler of the world, he has authority to acquit them at the judgment, and power to reward them for all the evils that they have suffered on his account.—The *fourth fact* treated of in this epistle is, that the great Author of the gospel laid down his life a sacrifice for sin, and by that sacrifice made an atonement, of which, when offered, God declared his acceptance, by setting Jesus at his own right hand, ver. 3.—The gospel, therefore, has a priesthood and sacrifice, infinitely more efficacious than the priesthood and sacrifices of the law taken together. For, an expiation made by a Person so great in himself, and so dear to God as his own eternal Son, and made by the appointment of the Father, could not but be acceptable to him ; consequently it must be a sure foundation for that hope of pardon, by which the gospel encourages sinners to repent and believe.

The authority of the gospel being supported by these four facts, the apostle judged it necessary to establish them on a solid foundation ; and for that purpose wrote this learned letter, which he directed to the Hebrews, because, being the keepers of the former revelations, they were the fittest judges, both of the facts themselves, and of the proofs brought from the ancient revelations to support them.

With respect to the *first* of these facts, namely, that the Jewish and Christian revelations were spoken by the same God, let it be observed, that the apostle did not think it necessary to set forth a separate proof thereof. For as the whole of the epistle was to be employed in shewing, that the doctrines of the gospel, which the Jews considered as contrary to the former revelations, were all taught by Moses and the prophets, it was such a clear proof of the two revelations having proceeded from the same original, that there was no occasion to offer any other.

With respect to the *second fact*, on which the authority of the gospel, as a revelation from God, is built, namely, that Jesus, by whom it was spoken, is the only-begotten Son of God, the apostle instead of proposing the direct proofs whereby that fact is ascertained, judged it more proper to answer the objections advanced by the Jewish doctors for disproving it. And the rather, because the particulars of which the direct proof consisted, had all been exhibited in the most public manner in Judea where the Hebrews dwelt, and were well known to them, Acts, x. 36—42 namely, that God the Father himself, in the hearing of many witnesses, had declared Jesus of Nazareth *his Son*, by a voice from heaven at his baptism ; and by a like voice at his transfiguration ; and by a third voice in the hearing of the multitude assembled in the temple : also, that Jesus had proved himself the Son of

God, by many miracles performed in the most public manner during the course of his ministry, and had often appealed to these miracles, as undeniable proofs of his claim : above all, that his resurrection from the dead, after the rulers had put him to death as a blasphemer, for calling himself *Christ the Son of the blessed*, demonstrated him to be the Son of God. Farther, these proofs had often been appealed to by the apostles, Acts, x. 38, 39. And to their appeals God himself continually bare witness, by signs, and miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost. The Hebrews, therefore, being well acquainted with the direct evidence on which our Lord's claim to be the Son of God rested, when the apostle affirmed, that *in these last days God had spoken by his Son*, he in effect told them that he had spoken by Jesus of Nazareth, and at the same time called to their remembrance all the proofs by which Jesus of Nazareth's claim to the dignity of God's own and only begotten Son was established. Nor was it necessary to enter into that matter more particularly, for the sake of others who might read this epistle : as these proofs were soon to be published to all, in the evangelical histories. In short, if the Hebrews in Judea were not convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the only-begotten Son of God, it was not owing to their ignorance of the proofs by which his claim to that infinite dignity was established, but to the objections urged against it, which had much more influence to make their obdurate hearts and rebellious minds reject Jesus, than the multiplied miraculous attestations above described, had to make them acknowledge him as the Son of God.

Of these objections, the most weighty arose from the lofty descriptions, given in the scriptures, of the nature and dignity of the Son of God. For by these the Hebrews were led to conclude, that the Son of God could not possibly be a man ; far less could he be born of a woman, or die. This, with other conclusions of a like nature, being extremely plausible in themselves, and strongly urged by the doctors, the apostle rightly judged that he would more effectually convince the unbelieving Hebrews, by confuting these arguments and objections, than by repeating the direct proofs above mentioned, with which they were perfectly well acquainted already. Accordingly, this is what he does in the second chapter. Only, as these objections were all founded on the accounts given in the Jewish scriptures, of the nature and dignity of the Son, the apostle with admirable address, before he attempted to confute them, introduced in this first chapter, (ver. 5—14.) the principal passages of the Jewish scriptures, which the doctors and people applied to the Son of God. For, by thus displaying his transcendent greatness, he gave the objections of the Jews their full force. At the same time, by applying these passages to Jesus of Nazareth the great Author of the gospel, he not only affirmed him to be the Son of God, but raised his dignity and authority to the highest pitch. See chap. ii. 1—3.

4 Being made ^h so much better than the more excellent name than they.
 angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a 5 For unto which of the angels said he at

^a Eph. 1. 21. Phil. 2. 9, 10. Col. 1. 18. & 2. 10. Ch. 2. 9. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Rev. 5. 11, 12.

His account of the dignity of the Son, the apostle begins with telling us that he is infinitely superior to the highest angels, because no where is it recorded in scripture, that God said to any of the angels, as he said to his Son, *My son thou art; to-day I have begotten thee*, ver. 5.—Instead of speaking to them in that manner, when he brought his only-begotten Son a second time into our world, in the human nature, by raising him from the dead, he ordered all the angels to worship him, ver. 6. So that although he took our nature upon him, and still appears in that nature in the highest heavens, he notwithstanding is infinitely superior in both his natures, even his human as well as his divine, to the highest angels.—Farther, the apostle observes, that the greatest thing said of angels in the scriptures is, that they are spirits, and God's ministers, ver. 7.—Whereas by saying to the Son, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, he hath declared the supreme Godhead of the Son, and his co-equality with himself, ver. 8.—Also, by saying, *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness, therefore—God hath anointed thee*; he hath declared the Son worthy of all dominion, ver. 9.—And, by saying to him, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning foundedst the earth, and the works of thy hands are the heavens*, ver. 10. the Psalmist has taught us, that the dominion of the Son springs, not only primarily from his supreme and eternal Godhead, but secondarily from his being the Creator of the universe.—And, by adding in the same passage, *They shall perish, but thou dost remain, and they all as a garment shall grow old*, he has ascribed to the Son eternal existence, and the divine attribute of immutability, ver. 11, 12.—Moreover, God having never said to any of the angels, *Sit thou at my right-hand*, &c. it is evident, that none of the angels ever received from God any proper dominion over the world, ver. 13.—What interference any of them have in human affairs, is merely that of servants, who, under the government of the Son, minister for the benefit of them who shall be heirs of salvation, ver. 14.

Ver. 1.] The design of the author of this epistle being, as we have observed, to shew the excellence of the Christian dispensation above that of the Jews in every respect; and that the Jews had no advantage in or by their law, which Christians had not in a superior measure by the law of Christ—he begins by giving an account of the dignity of the person of Christ; and intending to shew how vastly he was to be preferred to any of those messengers from God whom they most highly valued, he here looks back to his original and divine character, which was eternally antecedent to his incarnation; and then insensibly proceeds to consider his advancement in the human nature above the angels at his resurrection, ver. 1—14.

At sundry times, and in divers manners,] The word *πολυτρόπος*, signifies in many parts, or parcels, and refers to the parcels by which God's will was delivered, in opposition to a complete revelation: and this was done in various manners; namely, by dreams, visions, urim, prophets, voices, signs.

Ver. 2. Hath in these last days, &c.] This latter age of the world, or the days of the Messiah. *By his Son*, must here mean emphatically, “By his Son, as incarnate, and “appearing in the human nature;” nor can any argument be gathered from hence, that God spoke not by the ministration of the *Logos*, or second Person, before; but only, that he spoke not in so clear and express a manner. The word *heir* signifies properly “one who hath a right to “succeed to what another has in possession, after his “death;” but this cannot be the meaning of the word in this place, as it is impossible for the God and Father of all to die; and therefore it is used in the sense of *possessor* or *lord*, as the ancient classics and lawyers use it: and thus it implies the same with what our Saviour says, Matth. xxviii. 18. *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth*. See Gal. iv. 1. Acts, ii. 36. The apostle here lays down the assertion which he undertakes to prove, namely, that God had constituted his Son Jesus *heir* or *Lord* of all things. Having mentioned this, he just gives a hint or two of the greatness of his character, and then returns to his main assertion, pursuing it closely in the latter part of the chapter, and shewing that the angels themselves, the highest order of beings, are not only infinitely inferior to him, but subject to his jurisdiction.

By whom also he made the worlds] All the Greek fathers unanimously say, this shews the divinity of Christ. The *Socinians* by the worlds here understand the new creation, or the church begun by Christ's ministry upon earth, begotten and renewed by the evangelical dispensation. But this exposition cannot possibly stand; for, 1. Though Christ be stiled in some of the Greek versions, *Isaiah*, 9. 6. *The Father of the age to come*, yet the phrase *oi aiōnes*, absolutely put, does never signify the church or evangelical state; nor does the scripture ever speak of the world to come in the plural, but in the singular number only, preserving the phrase *Holam Habba*, as they received it from the Jews. 2. Were this the import of the words, the worlds might as well have been said to have been created or made by Christ's apostles, they being the great converters of the world; or at least, this being done by them assisted by the power of Christ, after he had been thus made *heir* of all things, it must have properly been said that Christ made the worlds by his apostles, which yet the Holy Ghost never thinks fit to intimate. Moreover, whereas this making of the world by *Jesus Christ*, is done by his *prophetic office*, that is to say, his speaking to us in the last days, the apostle had mentioned this already, and makes a plain gradation from it to his *kingly office*, in saying that he was constituted *Lord of all things*, not speaking of making the world by way of consequence, thus, *and by whom*; but by way of farther gradation, *by whom also* he made the worlds; as if he had said, Nor is it to be wondered that he should be constituted *Lord of the whole world*, seeing he made the whole. And that the apostle here speaks, not of the reforming of the new, but of the forming of the old world, he himself sufficiently instructs us, by saying in this same epistle, by

any time, ¹ Thou art my Son, this day have I a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
 begotten thee? And again, ² I will be to him 6 And again, when he bringeth in the ¹ first

¹ Pf. 2. 7. Acts, 13. 33. Ch. 5. 5.
 15, 18. Rev. 1. 5.

² 2 Sam. 7. 14. 1 Chr. 22. 10. Pf. 89. 26, 27.

¹ Pf. 2. 7. Prov. 8. 24, 25. Rom. 8. 29. Col. 1.

faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, Chap. 11. 3. For that by the phrase τὸ ἄκτιστον, we are to understand the material world, the *Scinian commentators* grant. This was the doctrine of all the primitive fathers from the beginning, as well as of all the early commentators on this text. *St. Barnabas* declares, that he is the Lord of the world, the maker of the sun, the Person by whom, and to whom are all things. He is, says *Justin Martyr*, the word by which the heaven, the earth, and every creature was made, by whom God at the beginning made and ordained all things, viz. the heavens and the earth; and by whom he will renew them. This *Irenaeus* delivers as the rule of faith contained in the scripture, which they who hold to, may easily prove that the heretics had deviated from the truth. He adds, that the barbarians who held the ancient tradition, did believe in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things therein, by Jesus Christ the Son of God; and this doctrine he repeats almost a hundred times elsewhere. Our doctrine, says *Athenagoras*, celebrates one God the Creator of all things, who made all things by Jesus Christ, from whom, and by whom all things were made. God, says *Theophilus*, made all things by him, and he is called the beginning, because he is the principle, and ruler of all things made by him. He adds, that by this principle God made the heavens: that God said to him, Let us make man; he being his word, by which he made all things. We rational creatures, says *Clemens of Alexandria*, are the work of God the word; for he was and is the divine principle of all things, by whom all things were made, and who, as the *Framer of all things*, in the beginning, gave also life to us; by whom are all things; who made man, our God and Maker, the cause of the creation. In the third century we learn the same from *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Novatian*, *St. Cyprian*, and others, cited by the learned *Dr. Bull*. So that in these two verses there are visibly these gradations; one, from Christ's prophetic office to his kingly office conferred on him as heir of all things; the other, from his kingly office to the foundation of it, laid in his divine nature, and in the work of the creation; it being, say *Irenaeus* and the ancient fathers, fit that he should reform and govern the world, by whom it was formed: that he should give new life to man, who gave him his being, and first breath.

Ver. 3. Who, being the brightness, &c.] Who, being a beam of his glory, and the express image of his substance. The word ἀπαύλασμα, which we render brightness, signifies that splendor or ray which proceeds from a luminous body. The words therefore represent the Father as Light, which is agreeable to other places of scripture: see 1 John, i. 5. But to raise their thoughts of the matter, the apostle sets forth this Light, by which he describes the Father, under the title of Glory; the design of which is, to express the purity, perfection, and lustre of all his attributes. Suitably to this account of God the Father, he represents the Son, as a splendor or ray eternally and essentially derived or proceeding from the Father: and as the beams or rays cannot be separated from the sun, that great fund of light,

so neither can the nature and the glory of the divine Son be separated from that of the Father: he is "Light of Light, very God of very God." The word χαρακτήρ, rendered express image, signifies an engraved or impressed mark,—an impress; and is a most emphatical word, since nothing can be more exactly and minutely represented, than by its impress on wax or metal. "Christ (says Leigh) answers to the divine perfections, as the impression of the wax does to the engraving of the seal." It is observable that Philo the Jew calls the Λόγος χαρακτὴρ καὶ εἰκὼν Θεοῦ, "the character and image of God." The word ὑπόστασις, signifies subsistence, existence; or, as the Greek fathers, before the council of Nice, frequently applied the word, "a distinct person in the Godhead." Comp. Col. i. 15. Upholding all things by the word of his power seems plainly to express, that as the Son gave being to all the creatures, so he maintains them all in being. The same thing seems designed, Col. i. 17.—By him all things consist. In both places the same works are attributed to him. See Matth. xi. 27. xxviii. 18. John, iii. 35. xiii. 3.—When he had by himself purged our sins, refers to the expiation of our sins by his death; nor can there be any question that the apostle refers to the death of Christ, considering what is here said to have followed immediately upon his purging our sins,—that he sat down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high. The words by himself are very expressive: for as (Ch. ix. 12, 26.) Christ is spoken of as making expiation by himself, and his own blood, and not by the blood of bulls and of goats, so here it seems to be intended, that Christ alone, without any assistance or concurrence of angels, or any other beings, made a perfect expiation of our sins. See Isaiah, lxiii. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Ephes. i. 20.

Ver. 4. Being made so much better than the angels,] Being made so much superior to, or more excellent than the angels, by how much he hath obtained a more excellent name than they. The word κενόνομακεν, signifies to obtain, or be in possession of; without taking in the notion of inheritance. See on ver. 2. Christ is called the Son of God; a name, which implies peculiar love and affection in the parent, and superiority over the family in which he is. Christ, therefore, as being the only-begotten Son of God, is infinitely superior to angels, and is vested with an authority which they are of course destitute of; and has a right and title to dominion, to which they have no pretension; nor is any one of them ever dignified with that name. Some consider this as immediately referring to Christ's authority and dignity, as Mediator; with which he was invested, when he sat down on the right-hand of glory after his resurrection.

Ver. 5. For unto which of the angels said he, &c.] The word for, shews that the sacred writer is here proceeding to his proofs. All the texts that are alleged by him, are to be considered as brought forward with this design; to shew that Christ at his resurrection was constituted, as man, infinitely superior to the angels. This amounted to a full proof, both according to the nature of things, and the notions which

begotten into the world, he saith, " And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, " Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, " Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of * righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 " Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* " thy God, " hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And, " Thou, Lord, in the beginning

hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 " They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: " but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, " Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all " ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be " heirs of salvation?

" Pf. 97. 7. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Luke, 2. 9—14. Mat. 24. 31. & 24. 37. & xviii. 1 Pet. 3. 22. * Pf. 101. 4. & 103. 20. If. 6. 2. Pf. 68. 17. Dan. 7. 10. 2 Kings, 6. 17. ° Pf. 45. 6, 7. & 93. 1, 2 & 72. 1—14. & cx. cclv. If. 9. 6, 7. & 32. 1, 2. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Dan. 7. 14. Rev. 3. 21. Prov. 16. 12. Gen. 18. 25. * Gr. *rightness*, or *straightness*. ° Heb. 7. 26. Mat. 3. 15. Luke, 24. 26. Dan. 9. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 9 Pf. 89. 26. John, 20. 17. Eph. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3. * If. 61. 1. Pf. 2. 6. Acts, 2. 18. & 10. 38. ° Pf. 102. 25—27. Exod. 20. 11. Pf. 24. 1. & 33. 6. Jer. 32. 27. If. 42. 5. John, 1. 3. ° If. 51. 6. 8. Rom. 8. 20, 21, 22. If. 65. 17. & 65. 22. & 34. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, 13. Rev. 21. 4, 5. ° Mal. 3. 6. James, 1. 17. Ch. 13. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 17. & 6. 16. If. 9. 6, 7. & 41. 4. ° Pf. 110. 1. & 118. 22. Mat. 22. 44. Luke, 20. 42. & 19. 12. Acts, 2. 34, 36. 1 Cor. 15. 25, 26. Ch. 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 7. 25. & 10, 12. Pf. 2. 6, 9. & xxi. cx. xci. Rev. xii. xx. 7 Pf. 103. 20, 21. & 104. 4. & 34. 7. & 97. 11. Dan. 7. 10. Mat. 18. 10. Acts, 5. 19. & 12. 7. & 16. 26. ° Kom. 8. 17. Gal. 3. 7, 9, 29. Eph. 3. 6. Titus, 3. 7. Ch. 6. 12, 17. 2 Pet. 3. 7. James, 2. 5. Mat. 25. 34.

which the Jews entertained of the angels: for, it being certainly true, and believed to be so by the Hebrews, that the angels, according to their original creation, had been made superior in their nature to other creatures; it must of necessity follow, that as he is superior to *them*, he must be superior to all *below them*: and since the highest order of creatures was made subject to him as Man, it might reasonably be supposed that the others were so too. Besides, as the Hebrews gloried in the revelations which had been made to them by angels, and were apt, upon that account, to set light by Christ; nothing could be more pertinent to the general design of the epistle, than the discourse here given upon this argument. We refer to the passages in the margin, and our notes upon them in the former part of this commentary; and also to Acts, xiii. 33.

Ver. 6. *And let all the angels of God worship him*] In proof of the infinite superiority of Christ over the angels, the apostle shews, that he was not only the Son of God, while even the highest of them were but servants; but that he was the object of their adoration and *worship*. It is matter of doubt, whence the quotation in this verse is taken; some taking it from Deut. xxxii. 43. and others from Pf. xcvi. 7. which seems the most probable. See the notes on that Psalm. Instead of *spirits*, in the next verse, Doddridge, Waterland, and others, read *winds*. " He who rules the winds and the lightnings, has his angels under equal command; and employs them with the strength of winds, and the rapidity of lightning in his service." However noble and lofty this description of the angels is, it falls infinitely short of what was before said, and what is immediately added in the next verses, concerning the Son: and in this view, the quotation was very much to the apostle's purpose.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, &c.*] This refers to that unparalleled instance of the love of moral rectitude, which Christ has given in becoming a sacrifice for sin; by

his atonement doing infinitely more, than has ever been done by any other intelligent and rational agent, towards displaying his love of righteousness, and his hatred of iniquity. See Philip. ii. 8, 9. Instead of *fellows*, some read *associates*. The correspondent Hebrew word to the word *Μερόχοι*, says Parkhurst, signifies *associates*; by whom are meant, " all men who believe on Christ." The word properly expresses " those who *partake together*;" *brethren*; —*joint-heirs*. See ch. ii. 11, &c. Rom. viii. 17. The force of this quotation lies in proving, that while the *angels* are but *ministering spirits*, (ver. 7, 14.) the *Son* is invested with regal power, and sovereign authority. *Hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, &c.* means, " Thou art exalted to superior honor and happiness; God the Father styling thee here, God, and an eternal king, ascribing to thee a throne and kingdom, and a righteous government to reward thy righteous servants whom thou lovest, and to punish thine obdurate enemies whose iniquities render them odious to thee." So that these words again prove, both his Divine nature, and his exaltation to the government of the world.

Ver. 11, 12. *They shall perish, &c.*] " They, permanent as they seem, shall at length wear out; but thou endurest in undecaying glory; yea, all of them shall grow old as doth a garment; and thou shalt remove them out of their place, and introduce a new scene of things, with as much ease as a prince lays aside one robe, and puts on another; but thou art ever the same, and thy years shall not fail through everlasting ages, nor can thy perfections admit of any possible diminution." How strongly is the *immutability* of Jesus Christ declared in this passage!

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels, &c.*] " But, not to insist on the manner in which men have addressed their homage and their praises to him, even under the inspiration of an unerring Spirit; let me refer you to another passage.

C H A P. II.

We ought to be obedient to Christ Jesus, and that because he vouchsafed to take our nature upon him, as it was necessary.

[Anno Domini 63.]

TH E R E F O R E ^a we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which

we have heard, lest at any time we should * let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken ^b by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience ^c received a just recompense of reward;

^a Ch. 1. 1, 2. & 3. 6, 12. & 4. 1, 11. & 6. 6, 11. & 10. 38. & 12. 6, 15, 25. & 13. 9. Pl. 119. 9, 11. Prov. 3. 21. ^b Gr. run out as speaking vessels. ^c Deut. 33. 2. Acts. 7. 53. Gal. 3. 19. Ch. 10. 28. Deut. 27. 26. Exod. 19. 21. & 22. 18, 28. & 31. 14. & 32. 27. Lev. 24. 14, 16. Numb. 4. 5, 15, 20. & 15. 30, 32. & 25. 2, 7. Deut. 13. 5, 6. & 17. 2. & 18. 20. 2 Sam. 6. 6. 1 Kings, 21. 20—24. Zech. 13. 3.

“ passage, in which the Father himself speaks to him under the character of his Son, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom; that you may thence take an idea of his grandeur. For to which of the angels, &c.

Ver. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits? “ I asked, “ To which of the angels said God at any time, *Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?*”—And I am well satisfied that no passage can be alleged wherein God is ever represented as using such language to, or concerning any of them. The description given of them is of a very different nature; and, instead of being set out as exalted to such a high state of dignity and authority, as *sitting at God's right hand*; they are represented as *ministering spirits*, whose proper posture is standing, and not sitting. See 1 Kings, xxii. 19. Zech. iii. 5. 7. iv. 14. vi. 5. The verse may be thus paraphrased: “ The spirits of heaven expect no such honour as this: the noblest of them all esteems himself happy in an opportunity of worshipping this triumphant Lord, and ministering even to the least of his servants. Is it not a known and delightful truth? are they not indeed all ministering spirits, who officiate before the throne of God, and are sent out to attend on all the faithful saints of God, who shall inherit salvation? and always willing to undertake the offices that he shall assign them for the safety and good of his faithful people? and therefore, far from thinking them in any view of comparison with him, let us humbly adore him, for the benefits which by his authority and favour we daily receive from these benevolent creatures.”

By the phrase, *Who shall be heirs of salvation*, several commentators suppose that the sacred writer has a particular reference to the Gentiles, who were to be made fellow-heirs with the Jews, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel. See Ephes. iii. 6.

Inferences.—With what satisfaction may we depend upon the divine authority of both the Old and New Testament! God, who formerly spake to the fathers by the prophets, now speaks to us by his Son; he began and gradually carried on various revelations at different times, in distinct parcels, and by several ways and means, which we have an account of in the Old Testament, till he completed them in the New. How thankful should we be that our lot is cast under the gospel dispensation! This is the clearest, the fullest, the best, and last discovery of the mind and will of God, that is to be expected in our world. And how glorious is the representation that it gives us of Christ in his divine nature and mediatorial office! He is essentially the same God with the Father, and yet personally distinct from him, as the brightness of his glory, and the express image of

his person, and is his eternal only-begotten Son; he is the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things contained therein, and upholds them by the word of his power: and in his office-capacity he is the appointed Heir of all things, in and by whom the faithful inherit the blessings of grace and glory. He is now exalted on his throne, with the highest dignity and honour, at the Father's right hand; his throne is for ever and ever; he is infinitely pure and spotless in himself, and righteous in all the administrations of his kingdom; he is fully invested with all authority above whatever was or shall be conferred on any prophet, priest or king, saint or angel; and at the last day he, who is the unchangeable God, will put an end to the present frame of this world, and change it into another, that will be inexpressibly more excellent and glorious. How safe and happy then are the saints under his care! And what an honour has he put upon them, in assuming their nature, and exalting it in union with his own divine Person in heaven, and in ordering all the holy angels to minister to them! O, with what solemnity and joy should they join with these celestial spirits in paying all religious adorations to him! And how dead should their hearts be to this perishing world and all its concerns, which wax old, and shall be laid aside like an useless worn-out garment!

REFLECTIONS.—The excellence of the gospel dispensation above the Mosaic opens this beautiful epistle. The apostle shews:

1. The different way in which God has communicated his will to the church of old, and to his people at present. *God, who at sundry times, by degrees, with increasing clearness, and in divers manners, by types, visions, dreams, and audible voices, and immediate inspiration, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, at the close of the Jewish œconomy, and in that dispensation of grace, which is the last that will be ever vouchsafed to the sons of men, and under this title of the last days has been foretold by the inspired penman,—God hath, I say, now spoken unto us by his Son, the most glorious messenger that was ever yet employed in communicating the revelation of his will to man; in nature one with the Father, in majesty co-eternal.*

2. He enlarges on the surpassing excellence of this Son of God, who has appeared in the human nature. (1.) It is he whom he hath appointed heir of all things as Mediator, exalting him to the sovereign and universal dominion over the works of his hands, and especially giving him to be Head over all things to his church, in and through whom alone any member of it can be entitled to the eternal inheritance. (2.) By whom also he made the worlds, exerting his co-agency and co-operation with the Father, not as an instrument,

3 ^d How shall we escape if we neglect ^e so great salvation, which at the first ^f began to be spoken by the Lord, and was ^g confirmed unto us by them that heard *him* ;

^d Ch. 10. 29. & 12. 25. Mat. 3. 7, 10, 12. & 8. 12. & 21. 40, 41. & 22. 7. & 23. 33, 37, 38. 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18. 2 Theff. 1. 8, 9. ^e If. 45. 17. Ch. 7. 25. John, 3. 16—18, 36. Acts, 2. 39 & 13. 26. Rom. 1. 16. Eph. 1. 13. Titus, 2. 11. ^f Rom. 15. 8. Mark, 1. 14, 15. Mat. iv. 10. Acts, i. Ch. 1. 2. Pl. 40. 9, 10. ^g Mark, 16. 15, 20. Luke, 1. 2. & 24. 47, 48. Acts, 1. 2, 3, 8. & i—xi.

instrument, but as the great Creator. (3.) *Who being the brightness of his glory, Light of Light, and very God of very God, possessing the essential attributes of Deity; and the express image of his person, bearing his exact resemblance in every divine perfection, appears his visible representative.* And, (4.) As he is the Creator, so he continues *upholding all things by the word of his power, supporting and governing them by his divine energy and providence.* (5.) *When he had by himself purged our sins, Himself the great High-priest and Sacrifice, expiating the sins of the world, which the blood of bulls and goats, shed by the Levitical priests, could never take away, and having by one oblation of himself, once offered, obtained eternal redemption for all his faithful saints,—(6.) When he had thus made the all-atonement sacrifice on the cross, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, in virtue of his own blood entering into the holy place not made with hands, and, as a priest upon his throne, (Zech. vi. 13.) he is exalted to the highest dignity and glory in his human nature.* (7.) He has the pre-eminence, not only above the greatest prophets, but over the highest of the heavenly hosts: *being made so much better than the angels; in his character as Mediator, as well as in the transcendent excellence of his divine nature, he infinitely surpasses the most glorious of all created beings, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, even the name of Son of God, in a sense peculiar to himself, and which appears evident from the transcendent exaltation which in virtue of his sufferings he has now by right obtained.*

3. In support of his argument, to prove the infinite pre-eminence of the incarnate Son above the highest of the angelic hosts, he brings the strongest proofs from those scriptures which the Jews admitted as of divine authority. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, the same in essential Deity; this day have I begotten thee, even from eternity, which to God is one permanent unsuccessive day; or this refers to his resurrection from the dead, whereby his eternal Sonship was manifested, (Rom. i. 4.) and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son, treated with peculiar and distinguishing love, and raised to the eternal throne of glory.* And again, *when he bringeth in the First-begotten, the appointed Heir of all things, into the world, at his miraculous conception, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him, and pay him that divine honour which is due to their Creator alone, and is the unalienable right of Deity. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire; their highest honour and dignity is to be the servants of the great Jehovah, and as flames of fire, with such activity and powerful agency, to execute his will and pleasure. But unto the Son, as their eternal King, he saith, Thy throne, O God, who art the essential Jehovah, is for ever and ever, from everlasting unchangeably the same, and to eternity must endure; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; thou hast the most undisputed title to reign;*

thy bosom is the seat of justice, and thy administration is marked with unfulfilled truth, holiness, and equity. *Thou hast loved righteousness, fulfilling it in thy own person, and approving it in thy people, and hated iniquity, about to punish it with everlasting perdition; therefore God, even thy God, thy covenant God as the incarnate Mediator, hath anointed thee to the office of prophet, priest, and king, with the oil of gladness, with the most immeasurable fulness of spiritual gifts and graces, above thy fellows, whether angels or saints, kings, priests, or prophets. And thou, Lord, in the beginning, before any creature yet had a being, by thy omnipotent creative power, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: all the creatures, spiritual or corporeal, animate or inanimate, from the highest to the lowest, own thee their great Creator. They shall perish, this visible creation of heaven and earth shall decay; but thou remainest, unchangeable, immortal; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, the creatures of this lower world are mouldering daily, and nature's dissolution is at hand; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, immutably, eternally; and thy years shall not fail, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. But to which of the angels said he at any time, as he did to his incarnate Son, Sit thou on my right hand, enthroned in supreme majesty, until I make thine enemies thy footstool, and raise thee triumphant over every foe, when sin, Satan, death, and hell, shall be for ever put under thy feet? Such language belongs not to the highest of the angelic host: for are they not all ministering spirits, servants to the great Mediator, and sent forth, under his command, to minister for them, in every kind office, who shall be heirs of salvation? that is, by right of sonship; for if sons, then heirs, Rom. viii. 17. and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ, Gal. iv. 7. and heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 29. for to as many as believed, he gave power to become the sons of God, John, i. 12. From the whole we may observe, (1.) The transcendent glory of the Lord Jesus: [1.] In his divine nature. [2.] In his mediatorial capacity.—The great Creator.—The self-existent Jehovah.—The eternal, immutable God.—The object of adoration to the highest beings, angels as well as men,—and reigning and to reign for ever and ever. (2.) The honour and office of the angelic hosts; to adore their King, to obey his mandates with delight and vigour, and to serve those highly distinguished sons of men, who are the faithful followers of Jesus Christ, their great Creator. (3.) The dignity of God's faithful children, standing in this high and holy relation to him as adopted by his grace, and designed for the enjoyment of his glory, attended by ministers of flame, and shortly to be conducted by them to their eternal home. (4.) Vast and amazing as this visible creation now appears, the day approaches, when, like the baseless fabric of a vision, all shall be dissolved; and by almighty power shall arise a new heaven and earth, to be the blessed abode of this*

4 ^h God also bearing *them* witnesses, both *racles*, and * gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?

^h Mark, 16. 17, 18, 20. Acts, 2. 22, 43. & 14. 3. & 19. 11, 12. & 5. 12, 15. Rom. 15. 19. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 11, 28.

* Or *distributions*.

the faithful redeemed. (5.) Jesus must reign on his mediatorial throne till all his enemies are finally subdued, and his triumphant people shall come to reign with him in glory everlasting.

CHAP. II.

THE foregoing display of the greatness of the Son of God being designed, not only to give the objections of the Jews their full force, but to make mankind sensible of the obligation they are under to obey Jesus, and to hearken to his apostles, the inspired writer very properly begins his second chapter, with an exhortation to the Hebrews, to pay the utmost attention to the things which they had heard from the Lord Jesus and his apostles, ver. 1.—For, says he, if our fathers, who disobeyed the command to enter into Canaan, which God spake to them by his angels, were justly punished with death, ver. 2.—how can we hope to escape eternal death, if we neglect the great salvation from sin and misery, together with the possession of heaven, which was first preached to us by the Lord himself, and which was afterwards confirmed to us by his apostles and ministers, who heard him preach and promise that salvation, ver. 3.—and whose testimony ought to be credited, since God bare witness with them, by the miracles which he enabled them to perform, and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost which he distributed to them, ver. 4.—But lest the Hebrews might despise the gospel, because it was not preached to them by angels, the apostle told them, that God had not employed angels to lead believers into the future heavenly world, the possession of which is *the great salvation* whereof he spake.—By this observation he insinuated, that the tidings of the great salvation, were not to be disregarded because they were preached to them by men, and not by angels, since these men were commissioned by Christ the only-begotten Son of God, ver. 5.

The Hebrews being thus prepared for listening with attention to the apostle, he proceeded to answer the different objections urged by the Jewish doctors against our Lord's pretensions to be the Son of God. These objections, it is true, he has not formally stated, because they were in every one's mouth; but from the nature of the things which he has written, it is easy to see what they were.—The *first* objection was taken from our Lord's being a man. This, in the opinion of the Jews, was sufficient to overthrow his claim altogether; because for a man to call himself *the Son of God*, was so contrary to every idea which they had formed of the Son of God, that even the common people thought it a blasphemy which deserved to be punished with death. John, x. 33. *For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* See also John, v. 18. and 1 John, v. 5. In this prejudice the people were confirmed by the sentence of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, who, after a solemn trial, pronounced Jesus guilty of blasphemy, and condemned him to death, because he called himself *the Christ*,

the Son of the blessed God; Mark, xvi. 61. a sentence for which there was no foundation, since in their own scriptures it was expressly and repeatedly declared, that *the Christ* was to be *the Son*, both of *Abraham* and of *David*. But the doctors, it seems, understood this in a metaphorical sense. For when Jesus asked the scribes, how the Christ could be both *David's Son* and *David's Lord*, they were not able to answer him a word; being ignorant that the Christ was really to become man, by descending from Abraham and David, according to the flesh.

A *second* objection raised against our Lord's being the Son of God and King of Israel, was taken from his mean condition; from his never having possessed any temporal dominion; and from his having been put to death. These things they thought incompatible with the greatness of the Son of God, and with his glory as the Christ, or king universal, described in their sacred writings. And therefore, when Jesus mentioned his being *lifted up*, the people objected, John, xii. 34. *We have heard out of the law, that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?* Their notions concerning the temporal dominion of the Christ, and his abiding on earth for ever, the doctors founded on Dan. ii. 44. where the empire of the Christ was foretold, under the idea of *a kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up, and which was never to be destroyed;—but which should break in pieces and consume all kingdoms.* Also on Dan. vii. 13, 14. Where *one like the Son of man* is represented as coming in the clouds of heaven, and receiving dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. Likewise in other passages, the kingdom and victories of the Christ are described by ideas and expressions taken from the kings and kingdoms of this world: and the Christ himself is called *God's king*, whom he would set on his holy hill of Zion; and *Messiah*, or Christ, the Prince. These things led the Jews to fancy, that the Christ was to be a great temporal prince, who would set the Jews free from foreign tyranny, and subject all nations to their dominion; that Jerusalem was to be the seat of this universal empire; and that every individual Jew would have some share in the administration of it. Wherefore, when Jesus of Nazareth refused to be made a king, and disclaimed all temporal dominion, and subjected himself to poverty, persecution, and death, they derided his pretensions to be the Christ, Mark, xv. 31. *The chief priests, mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.* Ver. 32. *Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.* These learned men were ignorant that the kingdom of the Christ is not of this world; that it is established, not by force, but by the Spirit of God and the power of persuasion, Ps. cx. 3. that it has for its object, the destruction of sin and of all its abettors, and the establishment of righteousness in the earth; that the victories by which these grand events are brought to pass, are all of a spiritual kind; and that the greatness of the Christ consists in ruling, not the bodies, but the spirits of

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

¹ Ch. i. 4. & 6. 5. & 8. 6—13. Rev. 11. 15. 2 Pet. 3. 13.

² Pl. 8. 4—6. & 144. 3. Job, 7. 17. Il. 40. 17.

of men, by drawing their affections and influencing their wills. And, as the Jews had no conception of these things, so neither did they know that the felicity which the subjects of the Christ are to enjoy, is not of this world, but of the heavenly country which was promised to Abraham and to his seed by faith.

The ideas which the Jews had formed of the Christ, and of his kingdom, being founded in ignorance of their own scriptures, though pretended to be derived from that source, it became necessary by clear testimonies out of these very scriptures, to prove, That, from the beginning, God determined to send his Son into the world clothed with flesh, so as to be the Son of man as well as the Son of God; that he was to possess no worldly dominion while on earth, but to be subject to all the natural evils incident to men, and at length to be killed; after which he was to arise from the dead, and in the human nature to be invested with the government of the world, for the purpose of destroying all the enemies of God, and of putting the righteous in possession of the kingdom promised to the saints of the Most High: I say it was necessary to prove all these things by clear testimonies from the Jewish scriptures; because no other proofs would be regarded by the unbelieving Hebrews.

With this view, therefore, the apostle quoted Pl. viii. 5. where it is foretold, that God would make his Son, in respect to his humanity, *for a little while less than angels*, by sending him into our world made flesh, and subject to death; after which he would *crown him with glory and honour*, by raising him from the dead, and placing him in the human nature *over the works of his hands*, ver. 6, 7.—and by subjecting all things under his feet. On this the apostle remarks, that we do not yet see all things subdued by him, and put under him, ver. 8.—But we have seen Jesus, in regard to his manhood, for a little while made less than angels, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man; and, for the suffering of death, be crowned with glory and honour, by his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his sitting at the right hand of God, and his sending down the gifts of his Spirit upon men. This certainly is evidence sufficient, that all enemies shall at length be put under his feet. No just objection therefore lies against Jesus as the Christ, for his having had no temporal kingdom, ver. 9.—Next, by informing us, that the Son was made flesh that he might die for every man, the apostle has removed the offence occasioned by the death of the Son of God. His death was necessary for procuring pardon to them who believe: and this appointment, the apostle tells us, is to be resolved into the free and unmerited love of God, because it belonged to him who is offended by the sins of men, to prescribe the terms on which he will pardon them. And therefore, when he determined, in bringing all his faithful saints to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *a perfect* or *effectual* Captain, *through suffering* death, he only exercised

the right which belonged to him, and what was necessary for the harmony of his own perfections and the salvation of his saints, ver. 10.—Then to shew more fully that God determined to send his Son into the world made flesh, the apostle subjoins more quotations from the scriptures, in which the Christ is spoken of as a man, ver. 11—13.

A *third* objection to our Lord's claim, was taken from his being born of a woman in the weak helpless state of an infant. This the scribes thought incompatible with the greatness of Christ the Son of God. Hence in confutation of our Lord's pretensions to be the Christ, the Jews said one to another, John, vii. 27. *We know this man whence he is. But when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.* Farther, because the Christ was foretold, Dan. vii. 13, 14. to come with the clouds of heaven to receive dominion, the Jews expected that he would make his first appearance among them in the clouds. This they called *a sign from heaven*, and desired Jesus to shew it, Matt. xvi. 1. But, to remove these false opinions, the apostle observed, that since the children or disciples of the Messiah, who submit to his spiritual reign in their hearts, partake of flesh and blood, by being born of parents who are flesh and blood, Messiah also partook of the flesh and blood of men, by being born of a woman, that through death he might, according to the divine promise concerning the seed of the woman recorded by Moses, destroy the devil, that is, all the influence of the devil, who had the power of death, ver. 14.—and deliver the faithful from the fear of death, by giving them the assurance of pardon and resurrection from the dead, ver. 15.—So that our Lord's claim to be the Christ, instead of being overthrown, was strongly established by his birth of a virgin.

A *fourth* objection was taken from our Lord's being subject to all the natural miseries and calamities incident to men. This the Jews thought inconsistent with the divine nature of the Christ. But, in answer, the apostle told the Hebrews, that Jesus did not lay hold on angels to save them, but on the seed of Abraham, ver. 16.—For which reason it was necessary, that in all things he should be made like his brethren, that is, those who would receive him as their Lord, and perseveringly cleave to him; that being their brother, and having the affection of a brother for them, he might exercise the office of a high-priest mercifully towards the human race, but especially towards them that believe, as well as faithfully towards God, by making propitiation for their sins through his death, ver. 17.—This however is not all. He was subjected to affliction and temptation like his brethren, that he might have such a fellow-feeling of their infirmity and of the difficulty of their trials, as would dispose him, in the exercise of his kingly power, to succour them when tempted, ver. 18.—These being considerations of great importance, they are suggested a second time, chap. iv. 15.

Such are the answers made by the apostle to the objections whereby the scribes endeavoured to confute the claim

7 ¹ Thou madest him * a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 ^m Thou hast put all things in subjection

under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who ⁿ was made a little

¹ Pf. 8. 5. Gen. 1. 26—29. & 2. 7—25. Pf. 2. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 20, 21. Phil. 2. 6—11. Luke, 24. 26, 26. If. 53. 12. Acts, 5. 31. Mat. 21. 47.
 * Or a little while inferior to. ^m Pf. 8. 6. Gen. 1. 28. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Mat. 28. 18. Eph. 1. 20—22. Phil. 2. 9—11. Col. 1. 18. & 2. 10.
 1 Pet. 3. 22. Ch. 1. 2. Dan. 7. 14. Mat. 17. 27. John, 3. 35. & 13. 3. & 17. 2. ⁿ If. 7. 14. & 11. 1. & 4. 2. & 53. 2—12. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Phil. 2. 7, 8. Mat. 1. 17—25. Luke, 3. 5—7. & 9. 58. Mat. 1—xxvii. Mark, 1—xv. Luke, 1—xxiii. John, 1—xix.

of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ the Son of God, taken, 1. From his being a man.—2. From his never having possessed any kingdom, and from his having suffered death.—3. From his having become man, by being born in the helpless state of an infant.—4. From his having been liable to all the natural miseries and calamities incident to men.—Wherefore, after hearing these answers, the offence of the cross ought with the Jews to have ceased for ever. And if any others reject the gospel, on account of the high titles given therein to Jesus, fancying that his greatness as the Son of God is inconsistent with his manifestation and sufferings in the flesh, the reasonings in this chapter are highly worthy of their consideration, as they afford a satisfactory solution of their doubts.

Ver. 1. Lest at any time we should let them slip. The word Παράψωμιν, rendered, *we should let them slip*, signifies properly, *we should fall off, or fall away*; namely, from the true religion, and saving grace. In the LXX this verb answers to the Hebrew יָרַד, to decline,—depart, Prov. iii. 21. where what in the Hebrew is, *let them not depart from thine eyes*, that version renders *Μη παράψωμιν, decline not, or fall not off from them*; the translators applying that to the person, which the original does to the thing. Our translators read in the margin, *Lest at any time we should run out, as leaky vessels*; referring to the metaphorical etymology of the word. See Parkhurst on the word Παράψωμιν.

Ver. 2. For, if the word spoken by angels. See Acts, vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. If the law was given by angels to Moses, (though the *Logos* undoubtedly presided among them and over them, on that solemn occasion,) but what was delivered to us was given by the Son himself; if, in the one case, he made use of his ministers to give his commands, but, in the other, he acts himself in person; how forcible is the apostle's argument, that we ought to give the greater heed to what is delivered by the greatest Personage. See Deut. xxxiii. 2. Instead of, *was steadfast*, Dr. Heylin reads, *was fully executed*. The threats denounced in the law were all put in execution exactly and rigidly, and every transgression, and every act of disobedience, (even such crimes under the law as gathering a few sticks on the sabbath, &c.) were punished with death: Numb. xv. 35.

Ver. 3. How shall we escape, &c. The Jews had no reason to imagine that God would remit the punishments threatened in the law, if they resolved to adhere to it, and would not embrace the condition of faith in Christ which was offered to them: for the law had never been repealed, but continued in its original force; nor would disuse make it of no force, if the Lawmaker would put it into execution. By *salvation* here is understood, the doctrine of salvation;—the gospel, which of course includes experi-

mental religion: and as this stands opposed to the word *spoken by angels*, it is necessary to understand it of the word or doctrine published by Christ: and all the expressions here used, of Christ's *beginning to speak it*,—of *men's hearing it*,—of its being *confirmed*, and that God *attested it*,—lead us to understand the place in the sense given. This doctrine of *salvation*, is said to be *begun to be spoken by Christ*, because there were some things which belonged to the gospel,—as the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit,—which were to be more fully published by his apostles after his death. *Confirmed to us*, signifies properly, *to our times*; to the times in which the apostle lived: and the sense appears to be, “They who heard Christ himself preaching, have continued confirming the truth of what he preached to us Hebrews, even to this time; having the gifts of the Holy Ghost, various in their kinds, as God has been pleased to grant them to them.” It would have been, not the term εἰς ἡμᾶς, but ἕως, which the apostle would have used, if he had intended to say, That he himself learned the gospel from those who had heard Christ; nor would he have said, that the gospel was confirmed to him by them that heard Christ; since elsewhere he declares, that *he had it not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ*. Gal. i. 1. Supposing now St. Paul to have written this epistle in the year 67, he then says, that those who had heard Christ, continued uniformly and constantly to attest what he had said, from that time to this; that is, for upwards of thirty years. They who from this expression would argue, that St. Paul was not the author of this epistle, mistake the meaning of the phrase here used; which does not relate to the person writing, but to the time when he wrote. They who had heard Christ himself, had confirmed, even to this time, steadily and consistently, what they had heard from our Lord himself.

Ver. 5. For unto the angels. “Angels, as I told you, are only ministering spirits; and though the law was given by them, yet in the present dispensation they have nothing to do in dispensing the gospel: for it is the Son of God, the Lord of all things, to whom is reserved the sole dominion over, and direction of the present dispensation; and who is the giver of that salvation of which we speak, and not angels, to whom we are not subjected.”

Ver. 6—9. But one in a certain place, &c. “Nor think it strange, that a man should be invested with such extraordinary power; for as the Psalmist says of man in general, that he is Lord of all the creation; that, low and mean, and helpless in ten thousand instances, as he seems to be, yet all things are in general subject to him:”

lower than the angels ° for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For ^a it became him, ^b for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing ^c many sons unto glory, to make ^d the Captain of their salvation ^e perfect through sufferings.

11 For both ^f he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them ^g brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my

brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, ^h I will put my trust in him. And again, ⁱ Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, ^j he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death ^k he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 ^l And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

^a Or by. Phil. 2. 8, 9. John, 1. 27. & 10. 17. Rom. 14. 9. Acts, 2. 13. Pf. 21. 3-5. Il. 53. 10-12. ^b 1 John, 3. 16. & 12. 32. & 4. 9, 10. & 2. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 5. 15. Rev. 5. 9. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Ch. 9. 14, 23. & 10. 12, 14. Rom. 5. 6-8, 10, 19. Ver. 10-13. ^c Gen. 18. 21. Exod. 34. 7. Pf. 11. 6, 7. Rom. 3. 25, 26. 1 Cor. 1. 24. & 2. 7. Eph. 2. 7. & 3. 10, 21. Luke, 2. 14. ^d Prov. 16. 4. Rom. 11. 56. 1 Cor. 10. 31. & 8. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 18. ^e Il. 2. 3. Zech. 2. 11. Rom. 5. 19-24. Rev. 7. 4, 9. ^f Acts, 3. 15. & 5. 31. Phil. 2. 9. Ch. 5. 9. & 6. 20. & 12. 2. Micah, 2. 13. ^g Ch. 12. 2, 3. & 5. 8. Mat. 3. 15. Luke, 21. 26, 46. ^h Ch. 10. 10, 14 & 13. 12. John, 17. 19. Gal. 4. 4. John, 1. 14. Acts, 17. 26. ⁱ Pf. 22. 21. & 18. 2. Mat. 23. 10. John, 20. 17. Rom. 8. 29. ^j Il. 18. 2. & 91. 2. & 28. 8. & 22. 8. Il. 50. 7, 9. Heb. 11. 2. Il. 12. 2. ^k Il. 8. 18. & 49. 6. & 53. 10-12. & 55. 5. John, 10. 29. & 17. 6, 9, 11, 12. ^l Ver. 11. Il. 7. 14. & 11. 1. John, 1. 14. Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 8. 3. Phil. 2. 7, 8. ^m John, 12. 31. Col. 2. 15. 1 John, 3. 8. Il. 25. 8. Hosea, 13. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55. ⁿ Luke, 1. 74, 75. Rom. 8. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 7. Il. 49. 24-26.

“ this, I say, is now literally and eminently true in the case of Jesus Christ, the God-man. *What is man*, says the Psalmist, *that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*—*Thou madest him lower than angels*, and yet *thou hast crowned him with great glory*, in that *thou hast given him dominion over the works of thine hands*. But then, when the Psalmist said, that *God had put all things in subjection under man*, it is plain that these words are not to be taken too rigidly: for the moon and the stars, and many other things, the work of God’s hands, are not in subjection to man. You are not therefore to understand these words absolutely and strictly of man in the general; but we see how all this is literally verified in *Jesus*, the God-man, the eternal Son of God, ver. 9. who, by becoming man, that he might suffer death, was, for a short time, in a very qualified sense, made lower and meaner than the angels; and because he suffered death, he was *crowned with glory and honour*, and obtained all power in heaven and earth, as man. He was made man, I say, and thus for a short time, in this respect, lower than the angels, *that by the grace of God*, and to show his exceeding kindness for us, he might *taste death for every man*.” See 1 Cor. xv. 25—27. Gen. i. 26. *A little*,—*ῥεῖον τι*,—may signify either littleness of the thing, or shortness of the time; and in both these respects Christ, while upon earth, was, in respect to his humanity, inferior to the angels; therefore they were sent to strengthen him. But he had a glory with his Father from all eternity, of which in some figurative sense he emptied himself to become man; and then, as the reward of his sufferings, he received his kingdom, all things being subjected to him. So that it was properly but a little while, or for some short time, that he was as other men are, *made lower than the angels*. See John, xvii. 5. Philip. ii. 6—10. Heb. xii. 2. *To taste death* is *to die*: and to taste death for all, or every man, is to die for the benefit of all

mankind, both Jew and Gentile. Now our Lord condescended to taste death for all; and the grace and kindness of God was by that means displayed to mankind in a most extraordinary manner, as the apostle explains it in the following verses.

Ver. 10—15. *For it became him, &c.*] Very different are the explanations given of this passage; that which appears to me the plainest and most just, is as follows: ver. 10. “ Such has been the conduct of God in the great affair of our redemption; and the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent in proportion to the degree in which it is examined. For, though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah, as a scheme conducive to the divine glory, *it well became him*,—it was expedient that, in order to act worthy of himself, he should take this method; He, *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things*; that glorious Being, who is the first cause and last end of all,—in pursuit of the great and important design that he had formed, of conducting all his faithful saints to the possession of that inheritance of glory intended for them;—to make and constitute Jesus, his only begotten and best-beloved Son, the leader and prince of their salvation, and to make him perfect, or completely fit for the full execution of his office, by a long train of various and extreme sufferings, whereby he was as it were solemnly consecrated to it. Ver. 11. *Now*, in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, the great Sanctifier, who engages and consecrates men to the service of God, and they who are sanctified (that is, consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance,) are all of one family, all in a sense the seed of Abraham by faith; *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them*, who thus yield to be saved by his grace, his brethren: ver. 12. *Saying*,—in the person of David, who represented the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, —*I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the*

16 For verily * he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made † like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in

things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 ‡ For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

* Gr. he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. 11, 14, 16. Phil. 2. 7, 8. John. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4, 5. Ch. 4. 15. & 5. 1, 2. & 8. 3. & 9. 14, 25. & 10. 10, 12, 14. & 13. 12. Luke. 24. 26, 46. & 4. 1—13. Ch. 4. 15, 16. & 7. 25, 26.

† Mat. 1. 1—16. Luke, 9. 23—34. Gal. 3. 16. Gen. 22. 18. ‡ Ver. Luke.

“ the church will I praise thee. Ver. 13. And again, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties, as others were, he says in a psalm which sets forth his triumph over his enemies, I will trust in him, as the saints have done in all ages, only in an infinitely higher sense; and again elsewhere, in the person of Isaiah, Behold I, and the children which God hath given me, are for signs and for wonders, ver. 14. Seeing then that those whom he represents in one place and another, as the children of the same family with himself, were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself in like manner participated of them, that thereby becoming capable of those sufferings, to which, without such an union with flesh, this divine Sanctifier could not have been liable, he might by his own voluntary and meritorious death abolish and depose him, who by divine permission had the empire of death, and led it in his train, when he made his first invasion on mankind;—that is, the devil, the great artificer of mischief and destruction; at the beginning the murderer of the human race; who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality, which is his work, and who may often, by God’s righteous permission, be the executioner of it. Ver. 15. But Christ, the great prince of mercy and life, graciously interposed, that he might deliver those miserable captives of Satan,—mankind in general, and the dark and idolatrous Gentiles in particular, who, through fear of death, were, or justly might have been, all their lifetime obnoxious to bondage: having nothing to expect, in consequence of it,—if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now, changing their Lord, they have happily changed their condition; and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life.”

Ver. 16. For verily he took not on him, &c.] The version of the margin is here to be preferred, wherewith the Vulgate agrees. The word *ἐπιλαβὴν* is used several times in the New Testament with a genitive case, as in this place, and always in the sense of taking hold. See ch. viii. 9. Matth. xiv. 31. Mark, viii. 23. Luke, ix. 47. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 19. The apostle’s reasoning stands thus: “ Christ took part in flesh and blood, because his design was to lay hold of, that is, to save, the seed of Abraham,—all the followers of the faith of Abraham, and not the angels; and upon that account it was highly requisite, that he should be made like unto the seed of Abraham, his brethren in sufferings and grace; in order to which, it was necessary for him to take part with them in flesh and blood; ver. 17.” It may be here asked, why the apostle should say, that Christ came to help the seed of Abraham, and not the seed of Adam? The reason is, he

was writing to persons zealous of the law, and who could not bear the notion of the Gentiles being admitted to equal privileges with themselves. Therefore, under the words the seed of Abraham, (which, in St. Paul’s language, implied all that were of faith, be they of what nation soever,) he artfully, and without giving offence to the Hebrews, expresses the full truth. Abraham was the father of all them that believe, Rom. iv. 11. and in this sense is the expression here used, to take in all that followed the faith of Abraham, whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

Ver. 17. Wherefore in all things, &c.] In taking flesh and blood, in sufferings, in death; for the next clause, see Rom. viii. 3. Philip. ii. 7. The following words may be rendered, that he might be merciful, and a faithful High-priest; merciful, in that being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted; and a faithful High-priest in things relative to God;—in doing all such things as the Father had appointed him; particularly in doing the office of a priest, by making a full atonement for the sins of the world. Concerning his fidelity, see ch. iii. 1, 2, &c. 1 John, ii. 2. Rom. iii. 25.

Ver. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, &c.] “ For wherein soever he himself suffered when he was tried, he must be the more inclined and willing to help those who are tried.” This verse perhaps might be better translated, and give a fuller view of the connection of the discourse, thus: For wherein [or, in that which] he himself hath suffered, being tried, he is able, &c. Our author seems to have his eye upon what he had said in the verse before, that it behoved him to be made like to his brethren in all things. And why in all things?—Because in whatever trials and sufferings he was made like unto them, he would be more effectually engaged to pity and succour them, and so to act the part of a merciful and faithful High-priest for them. It is plain, from the whole tenor of the discourse, that the apostle does not speak barely of a power and strength to succour, but of an inclination and readiness to do it; and therefore the word *δύναται* should not be rendered he is able, but he can, or is inclined. Sufferings naturally dispose persons to sympathize with others; and it is of that, considered as under the power and direction of divine grace, the inspired writer speaks; as may be further confirmed by what he adds after a long digression. See chap. iv. 15. v. 2.

Inferences.—How much more excellent and important is the gospel of Christ, than the law of Moses! This was indeed spoken by the ministrations of angels, and was divinely established; but that began to be spoken immediately in person by the incarnate Son of God himself, who is, both by nature and office, infinitely superior to the angels

C H A P. III.

Christ is infinitely greater than Moses: therefore if we believe not in him, we shall be more worthy of punishment than hard-hearted Israel.

[Anno Domini 63.]

WHEREFORE ¹, ² holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, con-

sider ³ the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

² Who was ⁴ faithful to him that ⁵ appointed him, as also ⁶ Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

³ ⁷ For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who

¹ Ch. 1. 9. & 2. 9, 10, 14, 17, 18. ² 1 Cor. 1. 2, 9. ³ 2 Cor. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 1. & 4. 1. Phil. 3. 14, 15. Col. 1. 2, 13. ⁴ 2 Tim. 1. 9. ⁵ 1 Pet. 2. 9. ⁶ 2 Pet. 1. 3, 10. ⁷ 1 Thess. 2. 12. ⁸ 2 Thess. 2. 14. ⁹ Rom. 15. 8. ¹⁰ Mat. 15. 24. ¹¹ Ch. 2. 17. & 4. 14. & 5. 5. & 6. 20. & 8. 1. & 9. 11. & 7. 26. & 10. 21, 22. ¹² Ch. 2. 17. & 5. 9. & 7. 28. & 10. 23. ¹³ 1 Jn. 13. ¹⁴ John, 8. 29. ¹⁵ Gr. made. ¹⁶ 1 Sam. 12. 6. ¹⁷ Ver. 5. ¹⁸ Numb. 12. 7. ¹⁹ 1 Tim. 3. 15. ²⁰ Ver. 1—5, 8—10. ²¹ Ch. 2. 9. ²² Zech. 6. 12. ²³ Mat. 16. 18.

angels in heaven: and this blessed gospel is confirmed to us by many faithful witnesses, who heard it from his own mouth, and were empowered still farther to publish it, with infallible certainty in all its extent and glory; God himself at the same time bearing witness to the truth of their testimony by various wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the good pleasure of his will. And O what a great salvation, comprehensive of all spiritual blessings, and surpassing all thought, does the gospel bring to them that by faith receive it! With what care and diligence then should we attend to it, that we may embrace and retain it, and not let it slip out of our thoughts and hearts without any practical and saving improvement of it! If it were just in God to punish the despisers of Moses's law, and they suffered accordingly, how much heavier vengeance will he certainly take on the neglecters of the gospel of his Son! But how astonishingly condescending is divine grace to mankind! Christ, passing by the angels, assumed our inferior nature into personal union with himself: and we may well cry out with admiration and joy, O what is man, that thou shouldst visit him in this kind manner by the Son of man! How low was our Lord brought for a little while! He was made lower than the angels in his state of humiliation, when, as the fruit of mere grace to the children of men, he tasted the bitterest cup of death. And how eminently is he now exalted in his mediatorial character in consequence of his sufferings, and as the righteous reward of them! The New Testament church and all its affairs, yea, all God's works of nature and providence, are already put under his dominion; and though all his enemies are not yet actually subdued, they must at length fall before him. How highly is God glorified in his appointed way of salvation through a crucified and exalted Redeemer! This is a way becoming himself, who is the first Cause and last End of all things: all the perfections of his nature, together with his law and government, shine forth with harmonious and illustrious honour in bringing a vast multitude of faithful saints to glory, through the Captain of their salvation, who was perfected for the remainder of his office by sufferings. He died, that he might reconcile them to God, and sanctify them for access to him and holy communion with him; that he might destroy the power of the devil, who brought sin and death into the world, and triumphed in the regions of mortality; and that he might take away the sting of death, and deliver them from its penal consequences, who all their lives long before had been brought into bondage by its terrors.

And O what a merciful and faithful High-priest is Christ! How effectually has he procured for the faithful reconciliation to God by his Blood! And how compassionately does he sympathize with them under all their temporal and spiritual trials, in remembrance of the bitterness of his own suffering the like for them; that he might seasonably help and relieve them in their most afflictive circumstances, till he carries them safe through all to eternal glory!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle, as he proceeds, applies the doctrine which he had advanced.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, considering the infinite dignity and glory of the Speaker; eagerly attentive to his words, storing them up in our memory, and fixing them as principles of action in our hearts; *lest at any time we should let them slip,* and our treacherous memories and hearts, like leaky vessels, should suffer them to run out. *For if the word spoken by angels,* the law given to Moses on mount Sinai, *was steadfast and valid,* stamped with divine authority, and guarded with the most awful sanctions; *and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,* as the righteous punishment inflicted by divine justice; *how shall we escape,* what aggravated guilt and ruin must be on us who have heard the gospel, *if we neglect so great salvation;* inexpressibly great, if we consider the depths of the miseries into which we were fallen, the wonderful means used to extricate us, or the infinite mercies, blessings, and benefits, accruing to us thereby; a salvation *which comes recommended in the strongest manner, as at the first it began to be spoken by the Lord of life and glory incarnate, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him,* the apostles and others, who, commissioned by him, proclaimed the glad tidings of his gospel through the world: *God also bearing them witness* to the divinity of that doctrine which they preached, *both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles* of the most stupendous kind, *and gifts of the Holy Ghost,* the most astonishing and various, *given according to his own will,* for the confirmation of their testimony: an attestation far more excellent than was given to the law of Moses. *Note:* (1.) When matters of such eternal importance are at stake, as the salvation of an immortal soul, we can never be sufficiently careful and attentive. (2.) Whatever punishments God inflicts on sinners, they are no more than the just reward of their deeds. (3.) Neglect of the gospel is among the most atrocious crimes, and will be visited with the severest judgments.

bath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that ^h built all things is God.

^h H. 42 5. Ch. 1. 2, 10. Eph. 3. 9. & 7. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17.

2dly, The apostle returns to the comparison between the Mediator and the angelic hosts, shewing his surpassing excellence.

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak, that is, the gospel dispensation, and the church under the new testament; not employing them as he did under the Mosaic economy. But one in a certain place testified, when contemplating the glories of creation, What is man, how despicable a worm, that thou art mindful of him, and shouldst send thy co-eternal Son to take man's nature upon him? or what is the son of man, a poor frail mortal, that thou visitest him, and in the person of the incarnate Saviour should raise the human nature to such distinguished and transcendent glory. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, or for a little while, during his state of humiliation and sufferings unto death; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, raising him triumphant from the grave, and exalting him to the throne of majesty on high; didst set him over the works of thy hands, bestowing on him absolute and universal dominion over every creature: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; not only all the enemies of his faithful people, sin, Satan, death, and hell, but all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him, angels, as well as others, being included within his absolute and universal empire. But now we see not yet all things put under him, either man in general, or any individual of the human species; (so that these words appertain not to any of Adam's natural descendants;) or, in some qualified sense, under Jesus Christ himself at present, who has not yet utterly subdued all his enemies, the time of his final conquest not being arrived. But we see this blessed Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, during a while, for the suffering of death, that he might in the human nature die for the sins of the world; wherein he appeared inferior to these immortal spirits; we see him now crowned with glory and honour, on a throne, at the right hand of God, reigning till every foe shall become his footstool; that he, by the grace of God, of his mere free, unmerited love and mercy, should taste death for every man, for every individual of the human species, Jew and Gentile, for all sinners of every rank and degree. Note (1.) The formal cause of our salvation is the free, unmerited grace of God; the meritorious cause is the death of our incarnate Redeemer. (2.) In Christ, man's nature is exalted above the angels; and we, by virtue of our union with him, have obtained even a more excellent name than they.

3dly, The cross was the offensive doctrine at which the Hebrews stumbled. The apostle therefore shews the excellence of this method of salvation: how glorious to God; how effectual for the faithful.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, it was most suitable and becoming, and served most eminently to display the glory of all his divine per-

fections, in bringing many sons unto glory, even the multitude of his faithful saints, to make the Captain, Leader, and Author, of their salvation, perfect through sufferings, completely fitted and consecrated thereby for the execution of his mediatorial office, having made full satisfaction to the divine justice for all their sins. For both he that sanctifieth, the Redeemer himself, who saves from the guilt, power, and nature of sin, and they who are sanctified by his blood and Spirit, are all of one blood, receiving the human nature from one common parent; and have one Father, even God: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, but condescends to own the endearing relation, saying, (Psalm xxii. 22.) I will declare thy name unto my brethren, opening to them all the glories of divine grace displayed in the gospel; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee, celebrating the wonders of thy love to thy believing people, (Matth. xxvi. 30.) and again, (Ps. xviii. 2.) I will put my trust in him, confident of his support under all my sufferings, and that they shall be effectual to the salvation of all that perseveringly believe in me. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me, as the travail of my soul,—all my faithful saints, for whom I am ready to undergo every affliction, that I may at last be able to present them before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy. Note: (1.) We must be God's children by adoption and grace, before we can receive the heavenly inheritance. (2.) In the method that God hath taken to save sinners, by the incarnation of his Son, he has acted eminently as became him, that, in the most amazing exercise of grace, he might withal make the most signal display of his justice and inexorable hatred of sin. (3.) The way to glory is the way of the cross: the Head and the members must walk in the same steps; and, since he hath gone before, he hath consecrated the cross, and to bear it is our honour, and will prove in the issue our unspeakable advantage. (4.) Christ is our elder brother; with what endearing affection ought we then to regard him, considering what he is to us, and what he hath done for us.

4thly, By Christ's incarnation and its consequences was the salvation of all his faithful saints to be accomplished.

Forasmuch then as the children, those whom Jesus represents in one place and another as the children of the same family with himself, are partakers of flesh and blood; and as in the human nature sin had been committed, in this nature it must be expiated; therefore he also himself likewise took part of the same, made exactly in the likeness of sinful flesh, and one with them; that through death, giving himself to suffer in their stead, and bearing their sins in his own body on the tree, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, by whose malice death first entered into the world, and who is the executioner of God's wrath upon sinners: but his dominion is now broken, and his kingdom overthrown, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who died and rose again, that he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage,—the sting of death, which is sin, being taken out

5 And ¹ Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those

things which were to be spoken after ;

6 But Christ ^k as a Son over his own house ;

¹ Numb. 12. 7. Exod. 14. 31. Deut. 3. 21. Josh. 1. 2. & 8. 17. Deut. 18. 15, 13. & 10. 21. John, 8. 35, 36. Zech. 6. 12. Mat. 16. 18. & 10. 25.

^k Pl. 2. 6, 7. 1 Tim. 3. 15, 16. Il. 9. 6, 7. Ch. 4. 14.

of their consciences, and all their dismal apprehensions of the consequences of death being removed. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, assuming the human nature, as a descendant from Abraham after the flesh. Wherefore we may hence infer, that in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, sin only excepted ; that, experiencing in his own person all the infirmities and miseries incident to the human nature, he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, touched with tender sympathy towards them, and with all fidelity discharging his office, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people by the fullest satisfaction paid to the divine justice, and appearing as their great High-priest, in the presence of God, with his own all-atoning blood : for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he knows what sore temptations beset his faithful people, can tenderly feel for them, and is able to succour them that are tempted, and make them with himself triumphant over all their enemies.* Note ; (1.) Christ is very man, as well as very God : it was as necessary that he should suffer in our nature, as it was essential to the efficacy of those sufferings, that he should be God incarnate. (2.) Satan, sin, and death, are all vanquished by the death of Christ ; and we may now triumph over them, since life and immortality are before us through our crucified Jesus. (3.) Christ hath made reconciliation between the offended God and the sinful soul : since he hath offered the atonement, justice is satisfied, and grace enthroned. (4.) It is our comfort under all our present trials and sufferings, that we have one to go to, who has felt our sorrows, knows our infirmities, and has now power great as his love, to succour and save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

C H A P. III.

THE apostle, in the first chapter of this epistle, having affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth, the person by whom God the Father spake the gospel revelation to mankind, is his *only begotten Son* : also, in the same chapter having proved from the Jewish scriptures, that God constituted his Son, *the heir or Lord of all things, by whom he made the worlds* : moreover, in the second chapter, having answered the objections urged by the Jewish doctors for invalidating the claim of Jesus to be God's Son, and having thereby given full effect to the direct proofs which established his claim, and which were well known to the Hebrews living in Judea, where they were publicly exhibited, he, in this third chapter, proceeds to shew what is implied in Christ's being *the Heir or Lord of all things* : which is the third fact on which the authority of the gospel revelation depends.

A proper account of this matter was necessary, First, because the title of Jesus to remove the Mosaic economy and to substitute the gospel dispensation in its place, was founded on the power which he possessed as the Son of God, and heir of all things. Secondly, because many of

the Jews, in the persuasion that the law of Moses was of perpetual obligation, and that its sacrifices were real atonements for sin, rejected the Lord Jesus as an impostor for pretending to abolish these institutions. Wherefore, to shew the unbelieving Jews their error, the apostle, who in the first and second chapter had proved the Son of God to be the Heir or Lord of all things, exhorted the unbelieving Hebrews, in this chapter, to consider attentively Christ Jesus the Apostle and High-priest of our religion ; that is, to consider how great a Person he is, that, knowing him to be the Son of God and Heir of all things, they might be sensible that it belonged to him to form and govern the house or church of God, ver. 1.—Next, to convince them that in forming and governing this spiritual house, Jesus acted agreeably to the will of his eternal Father, the apostle affirmed, that when he excluded the law of Moses and the Levitical priesthood from the new house, or church of God, which he built, he was as faithful to his heavenly Father who appointed him his Lawgiver in his church, as Moses was, when he established the law and the priesthood in God's ancient house the Jewish church. The proof of this affirmation the apostle did not produce on the present occasion, because the Hebrews were well acquainted with it. By voices from heaven, uttered more than once in the hearing of many of them, God the Father had declared Jesus, *his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased*, and had commanded the Hebrews to *hear him*, ver. 2.—Farther, the apostle told the Hebrews, that God the Father counted his only Son Jesus as worthy of infinitely more glory than Moses ; inasmuch as he who hath builded the house or church of God, not for his own salvation but for the salvation of others, hath more honour than the house ; is a more excellent Person than all the members of the church which he built. These things cannot be said of Moses. He built the Jewish church as an instrument under God, for his own use, as well as for the use of his brethren ; and so being a member of his own church, he was obliged to have recourse to its services, especially its typical atonements, equally with the rest of the Israelites ; whereby he was shewed to be a sinner like them ; consequently he had not, like Christ, more honour than the house, ver. 3.—This however is not all. To make the Hebrews sensible of the great power of Jesus as *the Heir or Lord of all things*, the apostle observed, that although every society civil and religious is formed by the ministry of some person or other, the original of all just power, and the governor of all righteous societies, is God, who, by constituting his eternal Son *the Heir or Lord of all things*, hath delegated his authority to him as man, and empowered him to model and govern these societies as he pleases, ver. 4.—More particularly, to shew that Jesus, as a Lawgiver, is infinitely superior to Moses, the apostle observed, that the faithfulness of Moses in building the Jewish church, was not that of a legislator who himself framed the laws which he established, but it was the faith-

fulnets

¹ whose house are we, ² if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

⁷ Wherefore, ⁸ as the Holy Ghost saith, ⁹ To-day if ye will hear his voice, ¹⁰ Harden not your hearts, ¹¹ as in the pro-

¹ 1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Eph. 2. 19—22. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Gal. 6. 9. Col. 1. 23. Ch. 4. 14. & 10. 23, 35. & 12. 1. & 6. 11. ² 1 Pet. 2. 5. Eph. 4. 12, 13. Col. 1. 27. ³ Mat. 10. 22. & 24. 13. ⁴ Pf. 95. 7—11. Ver. 15. Ch. 4. 7. Prov. 27. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 2. Luke, 19. 9. Pf. 119. 59, 60. Eccl. 9. 10. Prov. 8. 17. If. 55. 6. Ch. 2. 3. & 12. 25. ⁵ 2 Chron. 30. 8. Jer. 4. 4, 14. & 6. 8. Ezek. 18. 30, 31. & 33. 11. Ver. 12, 13. Ch. 12. 25. ⁶ Mat. 10. 22. & 24. 13. ⁷ 2 Sam. 23. 2. Mat. 22. 43. Acts, 1. 16. & 5. 30. Ver. 15. Ch. 4. 7. ⁸ Pf. 119. 59, 60. Eccl. 9. 10. Prov. 8. 17. If. 55. 6. Ch. 2. 3. & 12. 25. ⁹ Exod. 17. 2, 7. Numb. 14. 22, 27. & 20. 13. Deut. 6. 16. & 29. 3, 4.

fulness of a servant who established the laws which were dictated to him by his Master, without adding to or diminishing ought from them; and who formed the tabernacle and appointed its services, not according to any plan of his own, but according to a pattern which God shewed to him in the mount, without presuming to deviate from it in the least, Heb. viii. 5. This faithfulness in building all the parts of the ancient house or church of God, was required of Moses, in order that the things afterwards to be spoken by Jesus and his apostles might be confirmed by the attestation given to them in the figures, and ceremonies, and services of the law, ver. 5.—But the faithfulness of Jesus in building the new house of God, the Christian church, was that of a son in his Father's house, who, being *the Heir or Lord of all*, was entitled to remove the Jewish church, after it had answered the end for which it was established, and to erect the Christian church on a more enlarged plan, so as to comprehend believers of all nations.—Wherefore Jesus, in the exercise of that authority which belonged to him as the Lord or Governor of all things, having actually abolished the Mosaic economy and established the gospel dispensation, the apostle, to confirm the Hebrews in the profession of the gospel, assured them, that all who believe in Jesus with the heart unto righteousness, are as really members of the house or church of God, and as fully entitled to the privileges of the house of God, as the Israelites were who believed in a Messiah to come, with the heart unto righteousness, during the subsistence of the Jewish church, ver. 6.

Thus it appears, that the authority of the Lord Jesus as a Lawgiver, is infinitely greater than the authority of Moses. He was a Lawgiver in his own right; whereas in establishing the law, Moses acted only ministerially. His institutions therefore might be abolished by the Son of God, who, being the Heir of all things, hath all power in heaven and earth committed to him, Matth. xxviii. 18. If so, the Jewish doctors fell into a grievous error, when, from some ambiguous expressions in the law, they inferred that it was never to be abolished, and rejected the Lord Jesus as a false Christ, because his disciples affirmed that he had put an end to the law and to the priesthood.

The sacred penman having thus displayed the greatness of Jesus, as *the Heir or Ruler of all things*, addressed the unbelieving Hebrews, as an apostle of Jesus, in the words which the Holy Ghost spake to their fathers by David; *Wherefore, as saith the Holy Ghost, To-day, when ye shall hear his voice*; the voice of God the Father by his Son Jesus, commanding you to believe on his Son, and to enter into his church, *Harden not your hearts as in the bitter provocation*, &c. ver. 7—11. This exhortation of the Holy Ghost to the Israelites in David's days, the apostle with great propriety applied to the Hebrews of his own time, because, if

rejecting Jesus they refused to enter into the Christian church, God would as certainly exclude them from the rest of heaven, as he excluded their fathers from the rest in Canaan for their unbelief and disobedience.—He therefore requested them to take heed that none of them shewed an evil unbelieving heart, either by refusing to obey Jesus, or by apostatizing from him after having believed on him. This, he assured them, would be a real departing from the living God, ver. 12.—Then he ordered them to exhort one another daily to believe and obey Christ, ver. 13.—assuring them, that they should be partakers of his rest in heaven, only if they held fast their begun confidence in him to the end, ver. 14.—and told them that they might know this by its being said to the Israelites in David's time, *To-day, when ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts*: for such an exhortation evidently shews, that faith and obedience are necessary at all times, ver. 15.—Withal, to make the Hebrews sensible that unbelief and rebellion are extremely offensive to God, he put them in mind that by these sins, their fathers provoked God, ver. 16.—to such a degree, that he destroyed the whole congregation of the disobedient in the wilderness, ver. 17.—after swearing, that they should not enter into his rest, ver. 18.—Thus, says the apostle, we see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief, ver. 19.—and by making the observation, he has shewed in the clearest light the contagious fatal nature of unbelief; that it is the cause of the disobedience and punishment of sinners in all ages; and so he has put us on our guard against such an evil disposition.

I have only to add, that the apostle by exhorting the Hebrews to obey Christ, after describing his supreme authority in the church as its Lawgiver, and by setting before them the punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness, has insinuated that Christ is Judge, as well as Lawgiver; consequently he has both authority and power to render to all men according to their works; as will appear likewise from the things set forth, ch. iv. 11—13.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, holy brethren, &c.] Holy brethren may refer to what he said of those who were sanctified in Christ, ch. ii. 11. Partakers of the heavenly calling signifies, "Partakers of the call given us in the gospel to pursue immortality and glory." See ver. 14. The word apostle is, by way of eminence, put for "one sent of God;" and our Saviour has frequently, in St. John's Gospel, spoken of himself as sent by the Father. St. Paul therefore exhorts the Hebrews to consider Christ, who was infinitely higher than the angels;—who was, for our sakes, made in the flesh lower than they for a short time, but has obtained a more excellent name than they: who was sent by God the Father into the world, and so sent, as to taste death. "Consider him in these capacities, and add to them, that he was our High-priest, and entered into the holy of holies"

vocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

9 ' When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

* Pf. 78. 40, 41, 56. 1 Cor. 10. 9.

“ holies for us, removing all obstacles to the eternal happiness of his faithful people, and then judge if he be not superior to Moses. *Moses* was sent into Egypt, to redeem the children of Israel; *Jesus* was sent from heaven to redeem mankind: but then he was not only thus the *Apostle*, but he was likewise the *High-Priest* of our profession; and in consequence, not only infinitely superior to Moses, but to Aaron too; as will soon appear.”

Ver. 2. *That appointed him,*] Heylin reads, *who constituted him [in that office]*. The next words are taken from Numb. xii. 7. The word *house* is used, not only for a building, but for such as dwell in it;—a family, a people: And as God is said to dwell among the children of Israel, hence they are called his *house*; that is, his *servants*, his people. When the apostle says *his house*, he does not mean Moses's, but *his house* who appointed Moses; that is, *God's house*.

Ver. 3, 4. *For this man was counted worthy, &c.*] *For this [Jesus]*. The word *man* is inserted by our translators in both these verses. It is not in the original. The word *κατασκευαστας*, according to some, should be rendered, not built, but ordered, or governed, as the word *house* signifies not a building, but a family: and as the word *man* is not in the original (ver. 4.) they would render the clause, *For every house or family hath some orderer or governor*, referring the whole to Christ, as planning out and directing the Mosaic dispensation. Dr. Calamy has very forcibly inferred from hence the *Supreme Deity of Christ*, in consequence of his being the Creator of all things: and indeed it does not seem easy to make out the apostle's conclusion, or to find any true force in his argument, if we do not understand the last clause of the fourth verse as spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 5. *And Moses verily was faithful, &c.*] Moses did nothing but under the direction and government of a superior, and acted merely as a servant under a master in the house, or church, or family of God. He was faithful even to his declaration of those things, which were afterwards more particularly spoken of. He declared that one should arise like himself, to whom they were to hearken. By *testimony* is meant a truth published or declared: Moses therefore did not speak of himself, as if he were the person in whom the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was to be fulfilled; but he was *faithful as a servant*, to testify what he was told of his Master; namely, that Christ was to come, and to be obeyed, when it should please the Father to send him. He faithfully delivered the will of his Master, so far as God was pleased to convey the knowledge of such a Person to him; but a much greater information was granted to them that came after, who described the manner, the times, and circumstances of his appearance. See Acts, xxvi. 22. Luke, xxiv. 44. John, v. 46, 47.

Ver. 6. *But Christ as a Son over his own house, &c.*] Over the church; in which, as Heir or Lord of all things, he has not only a trust and office, but also a property. See ver. 4.

Instead of *the confidence*, some read, *our freedom of professions* and others, *the liberty*, that is, of access to God. See ch. iv. 16. ch. x. 19. 35. In all which places the word *ελευθερια*, says Sykes, should be rendered *liberty*. The Jews were all absolutely prohibited from entering into the *holy of holies*, which represented the throne of God (the high priest only excepted; and he having this restraint laid upon him, that he could enter it but once a year). But now the true *holy of holies* was opened to all, through Christ, and all Christians might have free access to the throne of God, in the highest sense in which we are capable of approaching it here below. And this freedom, without any restraint, was the *ελευθερια*, the *liberty* which they might use without any fear of death or harm for entering within the veil. In this place then of this Epistle the word *ελευθερια* is the liberty of access to the throne of God;—an advantage which no Christian is to give up. It is an access to the Lord and Master of the house; not by any others, as mediators in the family, but by and through the Son alone. *The rejoicing of the hope*, means the open avowal of the hope which we have of a future reward. This is the thing openly to be professed, and steadily to be adhered to, even to the end. See ch. x. 23, 26, 27. 31.

Ver. 7—9. *Wherefore, &c.*] “ We are the people of God, if we continue steadfast: wherefore, let me advise you, and exhort you, in the words of the inspired Psalmist, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, and be not stubborn and disobedient, as were our fathers at Massah and Meribah in the wilderness; (Exod. xvii. 2—7.) when they tempted God, and tried how far his power and goodness would extend.” The reasoning throughout this epistle is in general taken from the state of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and from what was done and said there; and the comparison is run between Christ and Moses; Christ and the high-priest;—the sacrifice of Christ, and the sacrifices then and there appointed;—the wilderness in which the Jews wandered, and the present life of Christians;—the land of Canaan, and the state of happiness or rest, to which we are called by Christ. The people of God are called out of the world, as the Israelites were out of Egypt: the people of God at present are going as it were through the wilderness, towards their rest in heaven, just as the children of Israel were marching through the wilderness to Canaan.—As this was the plan of the apostle, he speaks about the tabernacle, and the Jewish worship as at that time; and does not so much as mention the temple, except possibly in one place; or the state of things at the time when he was writing. His design was, to shew that *the Lord Jesus Christ*, and what he did, were infinitely more excellent, and infinitely more advantageous, than what *Moses* was and did. The superior dignity of the person of Christ was shewn in ch. i. The reason of his condescension to become incarnate in ch. ii. His infinite superiority to Moses, in the present chapter: in further proof of which he proceeds to shew,

10 * Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I *sware in my wrath, *They shall not enter into my rest.)

12 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But * exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; * lest any of you be har-

dened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made * partakers of Christ, * if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, * To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 * For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit * not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty

* Pf. 95. 10. Exod. 14. 11, 12. & 15. 24. & 16. 2, 3, 7. & 17. 2, 3. & 32. 7, 8. Numb. 11. 1, 4. & 14. 2-4, 11, 22. & 16. 3, 19, 41. & 20. 7. & 21. & 25. 1-3. Deut. 9. 7. & 29. 4, 5. Neh. 9. 16, 17. 1f. 63. 10. Acts. 7. 42, 44. Pf. lxxxviii. cvi. Ezek. 22. * Ver. 18, 19. Ch. 4. 3, 9, 11. Pf. 95. 11. Numb. 14. 20, 21, 23, 30, 35. * Gr. if they shall enter. * Ch. 2. 1-3. & 4. 1, 11. & 10. 23. & 12. 1, 15. Jer. 17. 9. Rom. 7. 5. 1f. 7. 9. John, 3. 18, 36. * Ch. 10. 24. 1 Thess. 5. 14. Pf. 32. 6. 1f. 55. 5. See ver. 7. * Jer. 17. 9. Prov. 28. 26. Rom. 7. 11. Eph. 4. 22. Ch. 12. 1. James. 1. 14. * Eph. 5. 30. Rom. 8. 17. Ch. 1. 9. & 4. 3. & 6. 12. * See ver. 6. Ch. 6. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude, 1. Prov. 10. 25. * See ver. 7, 8, 13. Ch. 4. 7. Pf. 95. 7-11. * See ver. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 10. 5-12. Numb. 14. 2-4, 11, 22. & 26. 65. * Deut. 1. 36, 38. Rom. 11. 4, 5.

shew, that the *rest* promised by Christ to his people, is infinitely superior, and infinitely more excellent than that which Moses proposed to the children of Israel; whence this inference is as strong as possible, that the Hebrews ought to adhere steadfastly to the word preached by Christ, if they desired to obtain that more excellent and glorious *rest*. Mr. Peirce observes, that the *wherefore*, at the beginning of ver. 7. connects with the beginning of ver. 12. *Wherefore, take heed, brethren, lest, &c.* and that the citation from the 95th psalm, which comes between, is to be read in a parenthesis.—Having cited that psalm, the author dilates upon it, and applies it to his purpose, in the following part of this, and the beginning of the next chapter.

Ver. 11. *My rest.*] *Canaan* is so called, as they rested there, after the labours of a long war, as well as the fatigues of a tedious march; and perhaps, as entering upon a course of stated worship, it might appear as a kind of sabbath-keeping. The word *my* is here added, both because God was the cause of this *rest*, and because the ark, which was supposed to be the place of his residence, ceased to be carried about. Under these images David Kimchi supposed that the signs of the Messiah were adumbrated.

Ver. 12. *From the living God.*] *Whose house* they are said to be, ver. 6. He is called *living*, as being ever one and the same; and therefore he must be always equally offended with the same sins.

Ver. 13. *While it is called To-day;*] That is, “As long as you can use this expression;—every day.—Exhort and encourage one another every day, to a steady perseverance in duty; and do this as often as the day comes, lest any of you grow careless, &c.” Dr. Doddridge explains it, “While you are under this dispensation of grace.” Perhaps the meaning only may be, “While you have it in your power; while your life is spared;—for the night cometh, when no man can work.”

Ver. 14. *For we are made partakers, &c.*] “For the benefits which we have from Christ, and that eternal salvation, even our rest, which he hath promised to us, are only to be had upon the condition, that we hold firm and unshaken our dependance, hope, and confidence, quite

“through our lives.” To be partakers of Christ, is to be made sharers, with others, of the doctrines taught by Christ in the gospel, and of the benefits and advantages which are promised by, and to be obtained through him. See ver. 1. ch. vi. 4. Col. i. 12. Ephes. iii. 6. Upon comparing the latter part of this verse with the last clause of ver. 6. the sense seems to be the same. So that here is expressed the condition of our being made partakers of Christ: as if he had said, “It is with good reason I urge you to use such care every day; for the exhortation in the psalm, in effect, does the same: there being no day, in which it is not to be understood as speaking to men in this manner, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* It will not suffice us, that at our first conversion we made a good profession of our confidence in Christ; but this confidence must be maintained every day, to the end of our lives. The neglect of it any day may have a sad consequence, beginning such a hardness of heart, as through the deceitfulness of sin may so increase, that we may lose our part in Christ.” What the apostle just mentions here, he prosecutes at large, ch. x. 23-39. and ch. xi. throughout.

Ver. 15. *While it is said, To-day]* The 14th verse seems to be a parenthesis, and the 15th is thus to be joined to the 13th: *Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you should be hardened, &c.*—“Exhort one another, I advise, by or from its being said, *To-day if ye will hear, &c.*” Thus, as in ver. 13. he had expressed the time when this mutual exhortation should be used,—*while it is called To-day;* and the end of it,—*lest any should be hardened, &c.* so in this verse he declares the ground upon which their mutual exhortation was to be built; namely, its being said, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Thus understood, the present verse agrees with the 13th: for, as there he cautions them against being hardened, so here he sets down the words of the text, which shews the danger there was of it; by which consideration they were to excite and stir up each other. See Pf. xlii. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. in the LXX.

Ver. 16. *For some, when they had heard, did provoke:]* The reasoning

years? *was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?*

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that be-

lieved not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

* Numb. 14. 17, 22, 29, 37. & 26. 65. Pf. 106. 24—26. 1 Cor. 10. 5—12. Jude, 5. † Numb. 14. 2—4, 17, 30. Deut. 1. 34, 35. ‡ Numb. 30. 12. Deut. 1. 32. John, 3. 12, 36. Mark, 16. 16. § John, 5. 10. ¶ If. 7. 9. 2 Chron. 20. 20.

reasoning is thus: "Do you every day exhort one another to steadfastness in the faith; omit no opportunity of doing so: do not delay, or put it off; for you see in fact, that some when they had heard, yet obstinately provoked: take care that you be not like them, either in sinning, or in suffering." The inspired writer speaks of this transaction with tenderness, saying only, that *some of them did provoke*, but not all; although among the adults there were only two exceptions, Caleb and Joshua; who, in such a vast multitude, were next to none at all. Nor was it necessary for the apostle to set forth a case so well known in the harshest manner: their own reflection would supply what might seem wanting, and bring the matter home upon them; who might learn by this example, that the vastness of the multitude of unbelievers would be no excuse for those who now believed not in Christ; nor would the smallness of the number of those who now believed in him, cause them to be overlooked, or to fail of obtaining the promised rest.

Ver. 18. *That believed not?* That is, were so obstinate and disobedient as entirely to forfeit all claim to his promise and favour.

Ver. 19. *So we see, &c.* "And thus we see, and it is as clear as possible, that the reason why they could not enter into the place designed for their rest, after their wandering in the wilderness, was because of their unbelief and disobedience."

Inferences.—With what incomparable dignity does our Lord Jesus Christ transcend *Moses*, in his person and office! *Moses* was merely a man, and a servant! and the best that can be said of him is, that he was a part of God's house, and faithful in his ministry: but Christ is more than a mere man or servant; he is the God that governs the church, and orders all its affairs; and is the Lord Proprietor and Ruler of it! and in all his administrations is faithful to his Father that appointed him to his office, as a divine Mediator and Saviour. How worthy is he of our highest regard! All, that profess to be partakers of the heavenly calling, should think frequently and honourably of him, as the great Apostle and High-priest of their profession, and hold fast the beginning of their confidence, and their rejoicing therein, to the end, as ever they would prove themselves to be faithful members of his family, in which he dwells. How watchful should we be against the first workings of unbelief, and much more against the prevalence of it! This is a mother-sin, which leads the way to all others: it proceeds from the corruption of the heart, and is in itself exceeding sinful: it is no less than a departure from the living God and Saviour, in whom is all our help, hope, and happiness. And, ah, how dreadful are the effects of apostasy! It is the highest provocation to God, and hardening of the heart against him. It is a

shameful distrust of him; a grief to his good Spirit; and a contemptuous neglect of all his dispensations of mercy and judgment; and brings the heaviest vengeance upon apostates themselves. How should the examples of the unbelief of others, and of their rebellion against God, and of their punishment, be a solemn warning to us, that we may not tread in their steps; but may be excited to an obedient faith without delay, while the door of mercy is opened in the gospel! It is our greatest interest and duty to attend, and yield ourselves up to what the Holy Ghost says in his word, and in secret suggestions to our souls; and not harden our hearts against it, lest God should, ere we are aware, swear in his wrath, that we shall never enter into the rest, which he has provided for his faithful people. But how great is the deceitfulness of sin to stupify the conscience! And what need have believers themselves to be daily cautioned, and to caution one another against it! No outward privileges or professions of religion will secure us from divine wrath, if our hearts are not right with God; but, blessed be his name, there are many of a more excellent spirit, like *Caleb* and *Joshua*. They are already partakers of Christ, and of the benefits of his purchase, and shall for ever enjoy him in the glorious state of heavenly rest, if faithful unto death.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have, in this chapter, the application of the foregoing considerations. The excellency of our great High-priest should draw up our hearts in all holy affection and humble adoration to him.

Wherefore, holy brethren, renewed in the spirit of your minds, partakers of the heavenly calling, admitted to all the blessings and privileges of the gospel, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, sent of God, appointed to his office on purpose to make reconciliation, and whom we profess to believe in as the author of all blessedness; consider his transcendent dignity, and the characters that he bears toward us.

1. With what fidelity he discharged his trust as a prophet. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him*, revealing to us all his Father's will; *as also Moses*, who was his eminent type, *was faithful in all his house*, communicating to the church in the wilderness, among whom Christ in the divine Shechinah dwelt as in his own house, all the statutes and ordinances delivered unto him.

2. How far superior he is to *Moses*, as the builder of his own church. *For this man (S'os)*, this incarnate Jesus, *was counted worthy of more glory than Moses*, inasmuch as he *who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house*. The master, owner, and builder of the house must needs be far above any member of the family which inhabits it; and *Moses*, though so distinguished, was but one of the many faithful in the church, of which the Lord Jesus is the maker and builder, therefore must be far inferior to him.

C H A P. IV.

The rest of Christians is attained by faith. The power of God's word. By our High-priest Jesus, the Son of God, who on earth was subject to infirmities, but not to sin, we must and may go boldly to the throne of grace.

[Anno Domini 63.]

LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest,

any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, † not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my

* Ver. 11. Ch. 12. 15. & 2. 1, 3. 2 Cor. 6. 1. Rom. 11. 20, 21. Ch. iii. 12. 15. Mat. 25. 10. Luke. 13. 25, 3, 5. † Ch. 2. 3. & 12. 25. Acts, 2. 39. & 3. 20. & 13. 46. & ii. xi. † Or because they were not united by faith to. † Rom. 5. 1, 2. & 10. 10. 11. 28. 16. & 45. 22. Ch. 3. 14. Luke, 14. 22, 23. † Pf. 95. 11. Ch. 3. 12, 18. Numb. 14. 21, 23, 30.

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things, and regulated, furnished, and set in order every thing pertaining to his church, whether under the Jewish or evangelical dispensation, is God, even that Jesus who shares all the incommunicable attributes of Deity, and is very God, as well as very man.

3. Moses was but a servant; Christ is the Son over his own house. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, principally, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; to foretel and prefigure in the rites enjoined by him, according to divine command, the great things that under the gospel should be more fully and clearly revealed. But Christ is infinitely his superior, as a Son over his own house, the church erected by him, and purchased with his blood; whose house are we that believe, the happy members of his family, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, which the gospel inspires, unto the end of life, which alone will eternally insure to us all the blessings of his holy family. Note; (1.) Christ is the glorious object, who should ever be in our eye: the more we consider him, the more shall we honour, love, and serve him. (2.) Those who are brethren in Christ, and truly partakers of the heavenly calling, will prove it by the holiness of their walk and conversation.*

2dly, As it is not nominal profession, but persevering fidelity, which can secure to us the eternal rest of heaven, the apostle proceeds to caution and warn them by former examples.

Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, (Pf. xcvi. 7.) To-day, if ye will hear his voice, without delay, or trifling with God's patience any longer, harden not your hearts, against all the calls and warnings of God, as your fathers did in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when by their murmurings, unbelief, and disobedience, your fathers tempted me, proved me, how mindful I am of my promise, and how long-suffering; and saw my works forty years; receiving the strongest evidences of my power and grace. Wherefore, wearied out with their perverseness, and incorrigible ingratitude and infidelity, I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, stubborn, and wilfully rebellious; and they have not known my ways; they delight not in them, and choose their own delusions: so I swear in my wrath, justly offended by their continued impenitence, they shall not enter into my rest, the land of promise, the type of that eternal rest which re-

maineth for the faithful above. *Note; (1.) While the day of life and hope is prolonged, we are called to seize and improve the precious moments on which eternity depends. (2.) Continued hardness of heart against the calls of grace, and the warnings of Providence, must infallibly issue in everlasting ruin. (3.) God bears long, but he will not bear always. He will swear in his wrath, that the incorrigible shall not enter into his rest.*

3dly, The example which he had quoted, the apostle applies,

1. For their caution. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you, as was in them, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Note; (1.) Unbelief is the great damning sin. (2.) There may be much heart-unbelief under the most specious professions of faith. (3.) Where unbelief prevails, departure from God our Saviour necessarily follows. (4.) It calls for all our watchfulness and prayer, that our souls do not suffer shipwreck on this fatal rock.*

2. He suggests the means of preventing the so-much-to-be-dreaded evil. *But exhort and encourage one another daily, while it is called To-day; improve every opportunity during this fleeting moment of life, to excite each other to watchfulness and holy diligence; lest any of you, who have made profession of the gospel, or experienced its power, be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; your consciences lulled asleep, and your souls perverted and seduced from the simplicity of the gospel. Note; (1.) Christian brethren should maintain a holy jealousy over each other. (2.) Since the time is so short, we need be earnest to redeem it for the best purposes. (3.) Sin comes with a most alluring aspect, and lurks often under the most specious appearances. (4.) Wherever sin gains possession of the heart, hardness and insensibility naturally follow; so that they who are in the most fatal danger, are the least apprized of it.*

3. He encourages them to end well, as they had begun. *For we are made partakers of Christ, or, we have been admitted to all the blessings and privileges which spring from vital union with him, if we hold the beginning of our confidence (ἀποστάσις), or subsistence in him, steadfast unto the end, and perseveringly abide in this holy fellowship, without which our former experience will avail us nothing. Note; Every believer is a partaker of Christ, and all things are ours if we are his; his merit, grace, and Spirit.*

4. He returns to the subject that he began with, to fortify them

wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

^a Gen. 1. 31. & 2. 1, 2. Exod. 20. 11. & 31. 15, 17.

them against apostacy. Improve the present moment *while it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation; to-morrow you may be launched into eternity, and time be to you no more. For some, when they had heard, notwithstanding every warning, did provoke God to abandon them: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses; Caleb and Joshua, and those under twenty years of age, still survived. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, who bore the righteous vengeance due to their iniquities, and whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, nor possess the promised Canaan, but to them that believed not, and rejected their own mercies? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Note; (1.) Unbelief of God's promises is among the most common and highly provoking iniquities. (2.) They who wilfully reject the counsel of God against their own souls, have only themselves to blame for their ruin. (3.) Such fearful instances should awaken in us a holy jealousy to make our calling and election sure.*

CHAP. IV.

THE apostle in this chapter enforces his exhortation to the Hebrews, chap. iii. 12. to beware of an evil heart of unbelief, by entering into the deep meaning of those passages of the Jewish scriptures, which describe the sin and punishment of the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, who flatly refused to go into Canaan. For with a sagacity worthy of the inspiration by which he was guided, he proves from the oath by which the Israelites were excluded from Canaan, that the promise to give to Abraham and to his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, was really a promise to give persevering believers of all nations, the everlasting possession of the heavenly country, of which Canaan was the emblem: and that the oath which excluded the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness from Canaan, likewise excluded all from the heavenly country who continue in their sins. So that in this ancient oracle, a future state with its rewards and punishments, was actually made known to the Jews.

But, to understand the reasoning by which the apostle has established this important fact, the reader ought to know, what all the Hebrews who understood their own scriptures well knew, and what the apostle expressly declared, Rom. iv. 16. namely, That in the covenant with Abraham, God promised him two kinds of seed, the one by natural descent, and the other by faith; and that the promise to give to him and to his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, being made to both the kinds of his seed, it was to be fulfilled, not only to his natural progeny, by giving them the possession of the earthly Canaan, but also to his seed by faith, all persevering believers, by giving them the possession of the heavenly country, of which Canaan was the emblem and pledge.

Upon these principles the apostle affirms, that notwith-

standing Abraham's natural seed have obtained the possession of Canaan, there is still left to his seed by faith, consisting of all God's faithful people, in all ages, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, a promise of entering into God's rest; for which reason he exhorted the Hebrews in his own time, to be afraid lest any of them should fall short of that rest, as their fathers in the wilderness fell short of the rest in Canaan, ver. 1.—His affirmation that, in the covenant, there is still left to Abraham's seed by faith, a promise of entering into God's rest, the apostle establishes by observing, that the promise of the everlasting possession of Canaan being made to Abraham's seed by faith, as well as to his natural seed, his seed by faith have received the good tidings of a rest in the heavenly country typified by Canaan, as really as his natural seed have received the good tidings of a rest in Canaan. Only these good tidings did not profit the natural seed in the wilderness, because they did not believe them.

Next, the apostle observes, that God's oath concerning the rebellious generation in the wilderness, was again mentioned by the Holy Ghost to the Israelites at the time they were in possession of Canaan, when he said to them by David, Ps. xcvi. 11. *They shall not enter into my rest, ver. 5.* Now though the apostle has not declared the purpose for which he mentioned this repetition of the oath by the Holy Ghost, the strain of his reasoning shews that his design therein was to prove, that notwithstanding the people were then in possession of Canaan, they had not entered into God's rest, according to the full meaning of his promise to give to Abraham's seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; but that there still remained a rest of God to be entered into, of which Canaan was only the emblem and pledge.

This fact the apostle takes it for granted that he has proved to the conviction of his readers; for in the next verse he says, since, after the Israelites were in possession of the rest in Canaan, it still remained for some in David's days to enter into God's rest; also since they who first received the good news of a rest in Canaan, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness, did not enter into that rest through unbelief, ver. 6.—it follows, that if the seed, who in the promise have received the good tidings of a rest in the heavenly country, do not believe these tidings, they are excluded from that rest by the oath which excluded the unbelieving generation in the wilderness from the rest in Canaan.

Next, the apostle observes, that in the xcvith psalm the holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, mentioned a particular time, namely, the time then present, for the entering of the Israelites into God's rest, *Saying, To-day, so long a time after they were in possession of the rest in Canaan, when ye shall hear his voice commanding you to enter into his rest, harden not your hearts, ver. 7.*—His design in mentioning the exhortation of the Holy Ghost to the Israelites in David's days, not to harden their hearts when they should

hear:

5 And in this *place* again, 'If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore * it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom * it was

¹ Pf. 95. 11. Ch. 3. 11. *preached.*

² Ch. 3. 16. Rom. 9. 6—8. & 11. 1, 2, 5, 7. 2 Tim. 2. 19. John, 10. 27—29.

* Or the *gospel* was first

hear God's voice commanding them to enter into his rest, the apostle has not declared. But the strain of his reasoning leads us to believe he mentioned that exhortation to teach us, 1. That the command to the Israelites in the wilderness to enter into God's rest, was not confined to them, but is a command to men in every age to enter into the rest which was typified by the rest in Canaan.— 2. That neither the Israelites, nor any of mankind in this life, enter into that rest of God which is principally intended in the covenant.—Wherefore, having only insinuated these things hitherto in his premises, he now expresses them more directly, by observing, that if *Joshua*, by introducing the Israelites into Canaan, had caused them to rest according to the full meaning of God's promise, the Holy Ghost would not, after that, have spoken of another day for their entering into God's rest, ver. 8.

The reader may observe, that in the foregoing reasoning the apostle has not drawn the conclusions which followed from his premises, but has left them to be supplied by the reader, either because they were obvious, or because the general conclusion, which he was about to draw from the whole of his reasoning, comprehends them all: namely, *Therefore there remaineth a sabbatism to the people of God*: in other words; seeing it appears from the oath, that the rest promised to Abraham and to his seed, according to its principal meaning, was not the rest in Canaan, there certainly remains to God's faithful people of all nations, the true seed of Abraham and people of God, a better rest, of which the rest in Canaan was only the emblem, ver. 9.—Withal, to shew that the remaining rest is not to be enjoyed by the people of God in this life, but in the life to come, and to give us some idea of its nature, the apostle adds, *He who hath entered into God's rest, hath himself also rested from his own works* of trial, even as God rested from his works of creation: consequently, he enjoys a happiness like to God's, ver. 10.—Then, as the improvement of his discourse concerning the rest of God, he took occasion, from the sin and punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness, to exhort all who read this epistle, to strive to enter into the rest which remaineth to the people of God, lest they fall or die eternally through unbelief, as the unbelieving Israelites died in the wilderness, ver. 11.—Withal, to enforce his exhortation, he described first the perfection of the gospel, by which men are to be judged before they enter into God's rest, ver. 12.—and next, the omniscience of Christ the Judge, who will render to all men according to their deeds, ver. 13.

Such is the account which the apostle has given of the great Author of the gospel, as the Creator of the world, as the Lawgiver in the true church, as the conductor of the spiritual seed of Abraham,—all persevering believers, into the heavenly country, the rest of God; and as the Judge of the whole human race.—He next proceeds to speak of him as the High-priest of our religion, and to shew, that as a High-priest, he has atoned for our sins by the sacrifice of himself.—This, as was formerly observed,

is the *fourth fact* whereby the authority of the gospel, as a revelation from God, is supported.

And to give both Jews and Gentiles just views of the gospel, the apostle affirms, that although no sacrifices are offered in the Christian temples, we have a great High-priest, even Jesus the Son of God, who, at his ascension, passed through the visible heavens into the true habitation of God, after the sacrifice of himself; and from these considerations he exhorted the believing Hebrews in particular, to hold fast their profession, ver. 14.—Then to shew that Jesus is perfectly qualified to be a High-priest, he observes, that, though he be the eternal Son of God, he is likewise a man, so cannot but be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, since he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, ver. 15.—On which account, we may come boldly to the throne of grace, well assured that, through the intercession of our great High-priest, we shall obtain the pardon of our sins, and grace to help us in time of need, ver. 16.—These being the doctrines which the apostle is to prove in the remaining part of his epistle, the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of this chapter may be considered as *the proposition of the subjects* that he is going to handle in chapters v. vi. vii. viii. ix. and x. And as his reasonings on these, as well as on the subjects discussed in the foregoing part of the epistle, are all founded on the writings of Moses and the prophets, it is reasonable to suppose, that his inspired interpretations of the passages which he has quoted from these writings, are no other than the interpretations which were given of them by the Jewish doctors and scribes, and which were received by the people, at the time he wrote.

Ver. 1. Let us therefore fear, &c.] The promise of God's rest, signifies such a rest as his is; namely, a state of peace and enjoyment, and freedom from labour. When a rest was promised to the children of Israel, it was a freedom from the uneasinesses and dangers of the wilderness; God's rest, when promised to the faithful Christians, is a freedom from troubles, in a state of eternal happiness. A promise then of this sort being made to us, we are to take care, not to neglect or despise, but to pay all due regard to it.

Ver. 2. Unto us was the gospel preached, &c.] For we are made partakers of the good tidings, as they also were: But the word which they heard, did not profit them, &c. The children of Israel had a promise of rest made to them; and so have we, as well as they. The word *gospel* signifies properly, as we have often observed, *good news, or good tidings*; which is the meaning of the word *εὐαγγέλιον* here: but as that term is now appropriated by custom to the particular good tidings of Christ, it renders this passage very obscure, to call the *good tidings of a rest, the gospel*. The meaning is, "We Christians have had the joyful tidings of God's rest, or a state of happiness, in a cessation from all our labours, preached to us, as well as the children of Israel had to them." The last clause might be rendered more properly, *Being not through faith mixed with* (that is, digested and turned into) nourishment, as it were,

first preached entered not in because of unbelief:
 7 (Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, "To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For "if * Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.
 9 There remaineth therefore a † ° rest to the people of God.

¹ Ch. 3. 18, 19. Rom. 11. 20, 25. John, 3. 18, 16. 1 John, 5. 10. ² Pf. 95. 7. Ch. 3. 7, 15. ³ Josh. i—xxi. Neh. 9. 22, 24. Pl. 78. 55. & 105. 44. & 135. 12. Acts, 7. 45. * That is, *Joshua*. † Or *keeping of a sabbath*. ° Ver. 7. 3. Gal. 4. 4—6. & 5. 1. Il. 11. 10; Zeph. 3. 17. Ezek. 34. 14, 25. John, 3. 36. Acts, 15. 10. Rev. 11. 15. & 7. 14—17. & 14. 13. & 21. 3, 4. If. 57. 2. & 60. 19, 20.

were, by those who heard it. Faith is here considered as the means by which the word of God is thus incorporated in the hearers. See ch. iii. 16.

Ver. 3. For we who have believed, &c.] This stands connected with the former part of the preceding verse: "Unto us was the good tidings of a rest preached, as well as unto them: For all we who have believed,—or, all who do believe, do enter into rest." Faith is the way by which men must expect to enter into whatever rest God promises in one age or another. The rest which was preached to them of old, they, for want of faith, and for acting disobediently, did not enter into; as appears from the declaration of God,—*So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest*: But that rest which is preached to us, is a far superior, an infinitely more advantageous rest; even such a rest as God himself entered into, when his works were finished at the creation of the world; and consequently it is quite different from that which was spoken of the children of Israel in the wilderness. It is not therefore the land of Canaan which is eminently called *my rest*, but a state where there is to be no more labour, nor sorrow; Rev. vii. 16, 17. The term *Kai toi* does not in this place signify *although*, but *for indeed*, or *for*; and the true meaning is, "All we that believe, that is to say, who perseveringly believe, (as the whole epistle proves,) are to enter into God's rest;—not that which the children of Israel entered into, and was then called *my rest*, but that which was eminently so called; that which was so called when the world was made." There are then two different things spoken of under the terms of *my rest*: the one, that at the end of the creation, when God's works were finished; the other, when the Israelites entered Canaan. This latter is but a trifle, compared with the former: for that of which we have the good news, signifies a state of perfect happiness and repose from all labour and burdensome fatigue; and this is the state into which all who perseveringly believe and obey, are to enter.

Ver. 4. For he spake in a certain place, &c.] The supplemental nominative case here is *Γραφή*, the *scripture*, not *be*: or it is to be understood impersonally, as in other citations in this epistle,—*It is said concerning the seventh day*. It was not customary for the Jews, when they quoted scripture, to mention the book or chapter; for they were so familiar with the sacred writings from their infancy, that they knew where to find any passage as soon as they heard it.

Ver. 6. Seeing therefore it remaineth, &c.] The difficulty here is, how does it appear, from the passages cited, that any were to enter into God's rest? That the incredulous and disobedient children of Israel were not to enter into

Canaan, the place of their rest, appears, because God had declared that that generation should not enter into it. But whence does it appear that any were to enter into that rest eminently so called?—The reasoning is this: 1. There is such a rest of God: this is proved from what the scripture says, *God rested the seventh day from all his works*. 2. That rest which is spoken of, and into which the children of Israel did enter, was not that rest of God; but though it was called his rest, yet it was not designed to be a cessation from all labour, but only from the labour in the wilderness. Since then the rest of God remained unpossessed, notwithstanding Joshua gave the people under his charge possession of Canaan, and we are invited still to come into the rest of God, there must be such a state to and for the people of God. Instead of *must enter*, we may read *do enter*; and instead of *they to whom it was first preached*, Doddridge and others read, *they to whom the good tidings were at first declared*; as in ver. 2.

Ver. 7. Again, he limiteth a certain day,] "The scripture mentions God's rest again, with a strong exhortation to the people in David's days; and he gives a strong encouragement to them not to harden their hearts: and even to many years after Moses was dead, he uses the expression *to-day*; which implies present time, and a rest different from that of Canaan, and what the faithful even then were to enjoy." Dr. Heylin renders this and the next verse more clearly thus: *He again determines a certain time, called To-day; saying by David, so long after the words recited, To-day, since you heard his voice, harden not your hearts, ver. 8. For if Joshua had given them rest, David would not afterwards have spoken of another day.* "The land of Canaan cannot be the true rest promised by God, because David speaks of a rest as still future, and to be acquired by such as were ready and willing, in his time, to hearken to the voice of God."

Ver. 9. There remaineth therefore a rest] The word hitherto used for rest had been *ναρπασιον*, *cessation from labour*: here a new term is introduced *σαββατισμος*, such a rest as was proper to the seventh day, on which God rested. The apostle had said, ver. 6. that the rest of God was left unpossessed; that generation which Joshua led into Canaan, did not then take possession of God's rest; for God, four hundred and fifty years afterwards, speaks of his rest as still to be entered into; therefore *his rest* still remained for the people of God. All that is here said is, to urge the Hebrews to continue steadfast in their faith, by proving to them that the rest of God preached to us by Christ, is infinitely more advantageous, and infinitely superior to that which was promised by Moses. It was a state of perfect happiness, peace, quietness in heaven: it

was.

10 For ^p he that is entered into his rest, he also ^q hath ceased from his own works, ^r as God *did* from his.)

11 ^s Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of ^t unbelief.

12 For ^u the word of God *is* ^v quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder

of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 ^w Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom ^x we have to do.

14 ^y Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus

^p See ch. 1. 3. & 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 10. 12. ^q John, 19. 30. Rev. 1. 18. Luke, 24. 26, 46. or 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2. ^r Ver. 3, 4. Gen. 2. 2, 2. Exod. 10. 11. & 31. 19, 27. ^s See ver. 1. Ch. 3. 19. Mat. 7. 13. & 11. 18, 28. Luke, 13. 24. ^t Or disobedience. ^u John. 1. 1. 1 John, 5. 7. Rev. 19. 13. or John, 6. 63. Pf. 147. 19. & 119. 11. ^v Eccl. 12. 11. 1f. 11. 4. & 49. 2. & 55. 11. Jer. 23. 29. Acts, 2. 37. 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. 2 Cor. 2. 16. & 10. 4, 5. Eph. 6. 17. Rev. 1. 16. & 19. 21. Rom. 2. 16. ^w Job, 26. 6. & 34. 21. Pf. 33. 13—15. & 34. 15. & 90. 8. & 139. 11, 12. Prov. 15. 3, 11. Jer. 23. 23. & 17. 10. John, 21. 17. Rev. 2. 23. ^x John, 5. 22, 23. Acts, 17. 31. Rom. 14. 9—12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Rev. 20. 12. Eccl. 12. 14. ^y Ch. 3. 1. & 2. 17. & 7. 26. & 5. 10. & 6. 20. & 8. 1. & 9. 11, 24. & 10. 21. & 13. 20. Pf. 110. 4.

was such a cessation from labour, as God himself enjoyed after the creation. This rest therefore ought to be the great object of our care, the grand point to be adhered to; and the principle by which it is to be attained, is a faith firm and sure.

Ver. 10. Hath ceased] Hath rested.

Ver. 12, 13, For the word of God is quick, &c.] “The word of God, which promised to the faithful an entrance into God’s rest in David’s time, and now to us, is not a thing which died, or was forgotten, as soon as it was uttered; but it continues one and the same to all generations. It is *Zōv*, quick, or living: so Isaiah says, *The word of our God shall stand for ever*: ch. xl. 8. compare ch. li. 6. lv. 11. 1 Esdr. iv. 38. John, iii. 34. 1 Pet. i. 23. and *powerful, efficacious*, active; sufficient through the power of the Holy Ghost, if it be not actually hindered, to produce its effects;—*effectual*: Philem. 6. See 2 Cor. x. 4. 1 Thess. ii. 13.—*and sharper than any two-edged sword*, τριῶντες ὀπίρη,—*more cutting than*: The word of God applied by his Spirit, penetrates deeper into a man than any sword; it enters into the very soul and spirit, into all our sensations, passions, appetites; nay, to our very thoughts; and sits as judge of the most secret intentions, contrivances, and sentiments of the heart: See Ephes. vi. 17. Rev. i. 16. ii. 16.—*piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*:—When the soul is thus distinguished from the spirit, by the former is meant that inferior faculty, by which we think of and desire what concerns the present being and welfare. By spirit is meant a superior power, by which we prefer future things to present; by which we are directed to pursue truth and right above all things, and even to despise what is agreeable to our present state, if it stands in competition with, or is prejudicial to future happiness. See 1 Thess. v. 23. Some have thought, that by the expression before us, is implied, that the word of God is able to bring death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira: for, say they, if the soul and spirit, or the joints and marrow, are separated one from another, it is impossible that life can remain. Mr. Peirce observes, that the apostle has been evidently arguing from a tremendous judgment of God upon the ancient Israelites, the ancestors of those to whom his epistle is directed; and in this verse, to press upon them that

care and diligence which he had been recommending, he sets before them the efficacy and virtue of the word of God, connecting this verse with the former, by a *for* in the beginning of it: and therefore it is natural to suppose, that what he says of the word of God, may have a relation to somewhat remarkable in that fore punishment of which he had been speaking; particularly to the destruction of the people by lightning, or fire from heaven. See Lev. x. 1—5. Numb. xi. 1—3. xvi. 35. Pf. lxxviii. 21. All the expressions, in this view, will receive an additional force; for nothing is more quick and living, more powerful, sharp, and piercing, than lightning. If this idea be admitted, the meaning of the last clause in this verse will be, “That the word of God is a judge, to censure and punish the evil thoughts and intents of the heart.” And this brings the matter home to the exhortation with which the apostle began, ch. iii. 12, 13. For, under whatever disguise they might conceal themselves, yet, from such tremendous judgments as God executed upon their fathers, they might learn to judge as Moses did, Numb. xxxii. 23. *If ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out.*

Ver. 13. Neither is there any creature, &c.] It has been greatly debated among commentators, whether this and the preceding verse are to be understood of *Christ*, the divine Logos, or of the gospel and scripture revelation. The interpretation given of the preceding verse, shews the idea that we have of it. But the sacred writer, by the present verse, evidently understands the word as accompanied with the divine efficacy of the *Speaker*, to whom he here plainly turns his discourse. *In his sight*, and *with whom we have to do*, evidently mean the great Author of that word, whose almighty power and universal knowledge give to the word the efficacy above assigned to it. The words rendered *naked and opened*, are generally explained as metaphorical, and taken from sacrifices. (See the Reflections.) The last clause may either signify, as in our translation, *with whom we have to do*, or to whom we must give an account, or concerning whom we are speaking.

Ver. 14.] The apostle having finished the digression about the rest of God, and having shewn, what he always keeps in view, the infinitely superior advantage of what is to be had by Christ, above what is to be had in or by the law;

the Son of God, let us ^a hold fast *our* profession.

15 For we have not an high priest ^b which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted^c like

as *we are*, yet ^d without sin.

16 ^e Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

^a Ch. 3. 6, 14. & 6. 11. & 10. 23. & 12. 1, 12. & 17. 7-9. Ch. 7. 26. & 9. 28. 1 Pet. 2. 22. 1 John, 3. 5. Dan 9. 24. 55. 6. Amos, 5. 4.

^b Ch. 2. 17, 18. If. 53. 4, 5. Luke, 22. 28. Phil. 2. 7, 8. ^c 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^d Eph. 2. 18. & 3. 12. Ch. 10. 19-22. Mat. 7. 7-11. John, 16. 23, 24. If.

law; he returns to what he had been saying, ch. ii. 17. iii. 1. Christ has been proved infinitely superior to Moses; and the *rest* that he promised infinitely superior to that of Canaan: he now proceeds to treat of Christ as our *High-priest*, still with a view of shewing his infinite superiority to the Jewish high-priest; and having mentioned what were the peculiar qualifications requisite in a high-priest, he proceeds to shew that Jesus had, in a most eminent manner, all those qualifications; that he was equal to Aaron, in that which was peculiar to Aaron; after which, he proves him to be infinitely superior to Aaron in many respects, in ch. vii. See ch. iv. 14. to v. 11.

Seeing then] The expressions in this verse bear a manifest relation to what the sacred writer had said in the two first chapters, and the beginning of the third, as will immediately appear to any reader who will be at the trouble of comparing them. *Passed into the heavens*, is, literally, *passed through the heavens*; to the highest heavens, or the heaven of heavens, that he might sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high; ch. i. 3. It is said of John Baptist, that he *confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ*. John, i. 20. That is, "He openly professed this truth." Hence, when difficulties have arisen, and good men have steadily persevered in the faith, they are said to *profess a good profession*: 1 Tim. vi. 12.

Ver. 15. Which cannot be touched with the feeling, &c.] With a fellow feeling, &c. See ch. x. 34. The Greek of the next clause is literally, *but in all things tempted according to a likeness*; that is, with us. Compare ch. ii. 17, 18.—*Yet without sin*;—we have added the word *yet* in our version. He underwent all kinds of trials, sufferings, and temptations: he stood firm, and went through them all, without any falling away from the truth, or doing any thing amiss;—we, therefore, through his grace, should act with the like resolution. Or rather the meaning is, (which seems more natural, and must be included according to the course of the apostle's reasoning,) that we should hold fast our profession in every respect, because we have a High-priest who knows how to *sympathize* with us, and will be the more inclined to favour us, since, though he was without sin, yet he was perfected through sufferings: ch. ii. 10. One further design of the sacred writer, in mentioning this circumstance, might be, to shew how infinitely preterable Christ, the High priest of our profession, is to the ancient high-priests; inasmuch as they were subject themselves to sin, and therefore had occasion to offer for their own sins, as well as those of the people. See ch. v. 3. vii. 26. 1 John, ii. 1, 2.

Ver. 16. To the throne of grace,] That throne on which God the Father, who hath shewn us so great favour through Jesus Christ, sits. "Let us come, not fearful or distrust-

ful, nor under any concern or anxiety, but with freedom and boldness, to this throne of God the Father, through our great High priest, who stands ready to make intercession for us; that *we may obtain mercy*; that all our sins,—not only those committed before our conversion, but likewise those of which we may have been guilty afterwards,—may through his infinite merits be forgiven us: *And that we may find favour, to have help whenever it is wanted*; seasonable, opportune help, if at any time we should fall into seasons of persecution, or any other great difficulties and distresses." Though the rule given us in this verse is never in any case improper to be observed, yet the scope of the sacred writer shews at what he more especially aims. He considers the Hebrews as compassed with infirmity, and as violently tempted by persecution to apostatize from their holy profession; in which circumstances help was peculiarly necessary and *seasonable* to them. Hence he encourages them to come freely to the throne of grace for it, and to expect it through this great High-priest, as the effect of grace and favour, and not of their own desert.

Inferences.—How ancient is the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ! It has been all along the same, for substance, under various dispensations, and different degrees of light, from the fall of *Adam* to the New Testament times: the promise of evangelical and eternal rest is now set before us with the clearest evidence in the preaching of the gospel; but our hearing it will be of no saving advantage to us, unless it be mixed with faith. How should we therefore dread the thought of taking up with any thing short of an effectual faith, to receive and digest what we hear, lest God should swear in his wrath against us, as he did against the unbelieving *Israelites*, that we shall never enter into his rest! But the faithful people of God shall enter into a better rest, than that of the land of *Canaan*; an everlasting rest in heaven, which is a delightful and holy sabbatism founded on Christ's resting from his mediatorial labours and sufferings on earth, when he had finished the great work of *atonement*, as the seventh day sabbath was founded upon God's having ceased from his *creating* work, when he had finished it.—How efficacious is the written word of God in the hand of Christ, the living and life-giving Word! He sets it home with power and penetration upon the heart, and gives the soul a plain view of itself, either for its reformation and comfort, or its condemnation and confusion. How awful, adoring, and endearing, should our thoughts of Christ be! All things are continually and exactly open to his all-seeing eye: as he is God the Word, he narrowly inspects and observes the most secret dispositions and designs of our hearts; and

C H A P. V.

The authority and honour of our Saviour's priesthood: negligence in the knowledge thereof is condemned.

[Anno Domini 63.]

FOR ^a every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things per-

taining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins :

2 ^b Who * can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

^a Ch. 2. 17. & 8. 3, 4. & 7. 27. & 9. 9. & 10. 11. & 4. 14. with Exod. xxviii. Lev. i—xxvi. Ch. 7. 28.

* Or can reasonably bear with.

^b Ch. 2. 18. & 4. 15. with Numb. 15. 22—29.

we have the most important of all concerns to transact with him, and must give an account of all that we think, say, or do, to him, as our Judge, at the great day. O solemn considerations ! But how sweetly are they tempered by believing views of him as the Son of God, our great atoning and interceding High-priest and almighty Saviour ! He has been exercised in our nature and world with the very same sort of temptations, inward and outward, as we ourselves are ; and he, still remembering what he suffered by them without sin, compassionates us under ours ; and is gone into the heaven of heavens now to appear in the presence of God for us. What an encouragement is this to hold fast our faith in him, and steadfastly abide by our holy profession of his name ; and to come with humble boldness and holy freedom of spirit to God, through him, as on a throne of grace at all times, and especially in the worst of trials, fears, and dangers, for all the seasonable mercy and grace that we stand in need of.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle, in the view of the foregoing observations,

1. Exhorts them to holy jealousy. *Let us therefore fear for ourselves, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, into the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter, any of you should seem to come short of it ;* overcome by temptation, apostatizing from your experience, or faltering in your Christian course ; so as, like Israel of old, to fail of the promised inheritance. *For unto us was the gospel preached clearly and plainly, as well as unto them more obscurely in types and figures ; but the word preached did not profit them, to any saving purpose ; not being mixed with faith in them that heard it,* and therefore never incorporated with their hearts, as the food when digested affords nourishment to the body. Nor will the gospel profit us any more than it did them, unless it be received by faith into the soul. *Note ;* (1.) The same gospel in substance was preached under the Old Testament as under the New ; and only by faith then, any more than at present, could any man be justified and saved. (2.) It is a dreadful thing to experience gospel grace, and yet to come short of glory, and perish in our sins. (3.) The way to ensure our entrance into the promised rest, is by constant watchfulness and holy caution. They who do not fear, will fall.

2. He shews the surpassing excellency of that spiritual rest, to which, under the gospel, the faithful are admitted. *For we which have believed, do enter into rest, through Christ, having present peace with God by virtue of our union with our exalted Head. As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest,* which implied a promise, that all the faithful saints should enter into rest ;

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world, and a sabbatical rest enjoined in consequence thereof, which was most eminently a type of that eternal rest which remains for all persevering believers : *for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, (Gen. ii. 2.) And God did rest the seventh day from all his works,* hallowing it for ever after as a day of holy rest ; concerning which God swore unto the Israelites. *And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest ;* as I live, saith the Lord, they shall not ; which being spoken by David to the people of his own days, could not refer to the land of Canaan, of which for some hundreds of years they had been in possession. *Seeing therefore it remaineth, that some must, or, rather do enter therein,* as is implied in the very threatening ; *and they to whom it was first preached, the generality of them at least, entered not in,* that is, into the typical rest of Canaan, *because of their unbelief : Again he limiteth, and fixes a certain day to come, saying in David (Pl. xcvi. 7, 8.) To-day, after so long a time had elapsed from their settlement in Canaan ; as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,* and ye shall enter into the promised rest. Now this must be different from the possession of the land of Canaan ; *For if Jesus, Joshua, had given them rest,* and none farther was to have been expected, *then would he not afterward have spoken of another day,* as he does in that psalm. Since then neither the sabbath literally, nor the land of Canaan, is meant in this passage of scripture, *there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God ;* a rest into which the spiritual Joshua should bring his faithful followers ; a rest infinitely preferable to either of these, even an eternal rest in glory everlasting. *For he that is entered into his rest, his final and complete rest, of which we now speak, hath also ceased from his own works,* entirely ceased from all the labours and fatigues of his works, as God rested from his own on that first seventh day, which, in commemoration of it, was appointed sacred to future ages.

2dly, Such a glorious rest being promised,

1. The apostle exhorts them to secure a part therein. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,* in opposition to every discouragement and difficulty, from sin, Satan, and the world, which may be laid in our way, considering the awful example above mentioned, *lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief,* and perish in his sins. *Note ;* The way to heaven is strait, and the gate narrow : we must strive if we would enter in ; the slothful never went to glory.

2. He enforces his exhortation by the strongest argument. *For the word of God, which gives you this account, or the uncreated Word, the Son, our Lord, and thortly to*

3 ° And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.
 4 ° And no man taketh this honour unto

himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.
 5 So also ° Christ glorified not himself to be

° Lev. 4. 3. & 9. 7. & 16. 6, 17. Ch. 7. 27. ° 2 Chron. 26. 16, 18. 1 Sam. 13. 9. 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7. with Exod. 28. 1. 1 Chron. 23. 13. Jer. 23. 32. ° John, 8. 54. with Pf. 2. 7. Ch. 1. 5. Acts, 13. 33. Prov. 8. 23—31. Micah, 5. 2. John, 1. 14. & 3. 16. Rom. 8. 3.

be our Judge, *is quick*, having life in and of himself, and is the author of it to all his creatures; *powerful* in agency, and omnipotent; *sharper than any two-edged sword*, in his gospel word brought home to the conscience by the operation of the Holy Ghost; *piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*; entering into the inmost recesses of the heart, carrying the deepest conviction, and working effectually in the faithful to bring the whole inner man into obedience to himself; and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, intimately acquainted with every secret of the soul. *Neither is there any creature, in heaven or in earth, that is not manifest in his sight*; nor can their inmost thoughts be hid from him; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, (γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχρυσίμενα.) As the sacrifices were flayed and laid open, and their entrails inspected with nicest care; so distinctly is every imagination of our hearts bare and exposed to him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and at whose bar we must shortly give an account. How awakèning a consideration! and what watchfulness and diligence should it excite in us, that we may be found of him in peace, and enter among his faithful ones into the promised rest. N. B. I have in the reflections above, met the sentiments of many spiritual commentators, and in my notes those of very many others.

3. He returns to the consideration of the priesthood of Christ mentioned (chap. iii. 1.) as an encouraging motive to quicken their diligence, considering the power and grace which were engaged for their support. *Seeing then that we have a great High-priest*, whose excellence is so superlative; and that, having offered the all-atoning sacrifice, he is *passed into the heavens*, into the holiest of all, into the immediate presence of God; *even Jesus the Son of God*, one in essence with the Father, and as Mediator exalted to the highest dignity and glory, able and willing to succour and save his faithful people to the uttermost: therefore let us hold fast our profession, unwavering; for we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one who tenderly sympathizes with every pang that we feel in body or soul, and was in all points tempted like as we are, only without sin. His love and compassions therefore being as great as his power, his faithful people may confidently expect salvation to the uttermost, and comfortably labour, when they are assured that it shall not be in vain in the Lord. Note; (1.) Christ is passed into the heavens, and appears in the presence of God, to plead the cause of all who are willing to be saved by grace. (2.) It should be an unspeakable comfort to us under every temptation, that Jesus has endured it before us, knows our weakness, feels for our distress, and is willing to proportion his grace to our necessities. (3.) This should embolden us under the severest conflicts to hold fast our profession, and never to be moved away from the hope of the gospel, seeing that he is near who strengthens us.

4. The glorious high-priesthood of Jesus should encourage us to draw near to God in prayer. *Let us, therefore*, having such an all-prevailing Advocate, *come boldly unto the throne of grace*, where our reconciled God in majesty and love unspeakable appears, inviting our applications—with humble reverence, and filial confidence; *that we may obtain mercy*, and pardons multiplied from day to day, and find grace to help in every time of need; in time, manner, measure, vouchsafed according to our danger, trials, and distresses, till he land us safe on the shores of eternal rest. Note; (1.) They who know the inestimable privilege of having a throne of grace to go to, will not fail to be found there often upon their knees. (2.) There is nothing that we can want, of which we are not assured of a supply, when by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we make our requests known to a reconciled God. (3.) All our hopes of mercy or grace arise purely from the great High-priest, who lives to make intercession for us; for in him God is always well-pleased, and with believers for his sake. (4.) Humble boldness becomes a child of God, when approaching that throne, where grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAP. V.

THE priesthood and sacrifice of the Son of God, and the pardon procured for sinners thereby, together with the many happy effects of the pardon thus procured, being matters of the utmost consequence to mankind, the apostle in this chapter, and what follows to the 19th verse of the tenth chapter, has proposed at great length, the proofs by which they are established. And it was very proper that he should be copious, not only in his proofs of these important subjects, but also in his comparison of the priesthood of Christ with the Levitical priesthood, that while he established the merit of the sacrifice of Christ, he might shew the inefficacy of the Levitical atonements, and of all other sacrifices whatever. For as the unbelieving Jews did not acknowledge his apostleship, St. Paul knew that his affirmation of these matters, though made by infallible inspiration, would not be held as sufficient evidence.

His proof of the priesthood of Christ, the apostle begins in this chapter with describing the office of a high-priest. He is one taken from among men, and is appointed to perform for men all the parts of the public worship of God; and in particular he is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifice for sin, ver. 1.—Next, he is a man clothed with infirmity, that from sympathy he may have a proper measure of compassion for the ignorant and erring, ver. 2.—And, because he is clothed with infirmity, he must offer propitiatory sacrifice for himself, as well as for the people, (but the difference here between Christ and every other priest is pointed out elsewhere,) ver. 3.—This account of the designation, character, and office of a high-priest,

made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

† Ps. 110. 4. & 6. 20. & 7. 3, 15, 17. Ver. 10.

priest, the apostle applies to Messiah, by observing, that as in the gospel church, no man can take the dignity of a high-priest to himself, but only the person who is called to the office by God, like Aaron in the Jewish church, ver. 4.—so the Christ did not, by his own authority, assume the office of high-priest in the house of God; but he (God the Father,) bestowed that dignity upon him, who declared him *his Son* by raising him from the dead, who in the Divinity was eternally such, ver. 5.—And who, by so doing, confirmed all the doctrines which he taught, and particularly the doctrine of his shedding his blood for the remission of sins.—Farther, that God the Father bestowed on Messiah the office of a high priest, is evident from his saying to him, after he invited him to sit at his right hand, Psal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec*, ver. 6.—These clear testimonies from their own scriptures, left the unbelieving Hebrews no room to doubt that Jesus of Nazareth, who by his resurrection from the dead was declared to be the *Christ the Son of God*, was by his Father's appointment a real Priest.

Having thus proved to the unbelieving Hebrews, that Jesus was made of God the Father a High-priest, the apostle shewed in the next place, that notwithstanding he was the Son of God, he possessed the other qualification necessary to a high-priest, mentioned ver. 2. namely, That he was able to have a right measure of compassion on the ignorant and erring, because he himself also, by living in the flesh subject to the temptations and afflictions incident to men, was surrounded with infirmity. In proof of this proposition, the apostle appealed to two facts well known; the first is, that while he lived on earth in the flesh, he prayed, with strong crying and tears, to him who was able to save him from death. The second is, that he was delivered, in that he feared. These facts the apostle mentioned, because the one was a proof that Jesus experienced the infirmity and temptations incident to men: the other, that he received help from God the Father, ver. 7.—Wherefore, although he was the Son of God, yet being also the Son of man, he learned how difficult obedience is to men, by the things which he himself suffered in the flesh while he obeyed his heavenly Father: consequently, he is well qualified, as a High-priest, to have a right measure of compassion on the ignorant and erring, ver. 8.—And being thus made a perfect High-priest, he became, by his dying as a sacrifice for sin, to all them who obey him, the author of eternal salvation, ver. 9.—as is plain from his being saluted by God the Father, *an High-priest after the order of Melchizedec* on his return from the earth to heaven, ver. 10.

By calling the speech of God the Father recorded Psal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec, a salutation of Messiah as a High-priest*, the apostle has discovered to us a variety of important matters implied in, or connected with that memorable speech: Such as, 1. That being directed

to Messiah, it was a declaration on the part of God the Father, that he had made Jesus a High-priest, not simply like Aaron, but with an oath; that is, in the most solemn manner and irrevocably.—2. Inasmuch as Messiah was thus saluted on his sitting down at the right hand of God the Father, in consequence of his being invited to do so, Psal. cx. 1. the salutation was given after he had offered the sacrifice of himself, by presenting his crucified body before the presence of his heavenly Father. See Heb. viii. 3.—3. This salutation, on such an occasion, being given to Messiah, in the hearing of the angelic hosts assembled around the throne, to do honour to him on his return from the earth after finishing his ministrations there as a Prophet, and to witness the offering of the sacrifice of himself as a High-priest for the sins of the world, it was a declaration from God the Father, that he accepted that sacrifice as a sufficient atonement for all the sins of the faithful; that his intercession for such, founded on the merit of that atonement, would be completely heard; and that his heavenly Father fully approved all his ministrations on earth.—4. Seeing, in the salutation, the Father called Messiah, *a Priest after the order of Melchizedec*, who was a king as well as a priest, he, by that appellation and by placing him in the human nature at his right hand, declared him to be not only a High-priest, but the Governor and Judge of the world. So that there can be no doubt of his procuring salvation for his obedient subjects, through the merit of his death as an atonement. Wherefore, those passages of scripture in which his death is spoken of as a sacrifice for sin, being all literally meant, should by no means be considered, either as figures of speech, or as accommodations to the prejudices of mankind concerning the efficacy of propitiatory sacrifices. See ch. ix. 18.—Such are the important meanings comprehended in the expression, *saluted of God an High-priest, after the order of Melchizedec*; as we learn from the apostle's reasonings in the subsequent parts of this epistle.

Accordingly, that mankind may enjoy all the consolations which flow from the right apprehension and belief of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ, the apostle judged it necessary to search into the deep meaning of the oath by which God the Father constituted Messiah *a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec*. And to excite the Hebrews to attend to what he was to write in chap. vii. 11—28. concerning the import of the oath, he told them he had many things to say concerning Melchizedec, after whose order Messiah was made a Priest, by which Messiah's priesthood would be illustrated and confirmed. But he found it difficult to make them understand these things, because they were of slow apprehension in spiritual matters, ver. 11.—Wherefore, to make them more diligent than they had hitherto been in gaining religious knowledge, he told them plainly, their ignorance of their own scriptures was such, that notwithstanding they ought to have been teachers of others, they needed to be again taught some of the first principles

7 Who in the days of his ^c flesh, when ^b he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and ^d was heard ^e in that he feared ;
 8 ^k Though he were a Son, yet learned he

^c Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Mat. 8. 20. 2 Cor. 8. 9. ^b Ps. xxii. lxi. & 4. 11—13. Mat. 26. 38—42, 53. & 27. 46, 50. John, 17. 1. Mark, 14. 36. John, 12. 27. ^d Luke, 22. 43. Ps. 22. 21. John, 11. 42. Mat. 27. 47. ^e Or for his piety. ^k Psal. 2. 6—8. Ch. 1. 5, 8. & 3. 6. & 2. 10. Zech. 13. 7. Mal. 3. 15, 17. & 5. 17.

principles of the oracles of God; consequently they required to be fed with milk, and not with strong meat, ver. 12.—This, he told them, was a very imperfect state, because every one who uses *milk*, that is, who knows nothing but the obvious sense of the ancient revelations, and does not enter into their deep meaning, must be very unskillful in the doctrines of the gospel, and is a mere babe in Christianity, ver. 13.—Whereas, the doctrines concealed under the types and figures of the ancient revelations, being difficult to be understood, may be likened to *strong meat*, the food of grown men, because, when rightly apprehended, they greatly strengthen men's faith, by the light which they throw on the doctrines of the gospel, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. For every high-priest] This stands connected with the preceding verse, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace,—for that, or because every high-priest—is ordained, that he may offer, &c.* as that last verse of the former chapter is in consequence of what is said ver. 14.

Ver. 2. Who can have compassion] The word *μετριοπαθειν* signifies “to treat with moderation and gentleness.” See the margin. “Who is able to proportion his compassion to those that are ignorant, and wandering from the exact paths of God's commandments, because he himself also is incident to infirmity.” The ignorant and erroneous are here put, by a usual figure, for those who wander, or sin, through ignorance; the case, in which priests, appointed by men, were to offer sacrifices for them.

Ver. 3. And by reason hereof] “By reason of this infirmity, common to him and all mankind, he is obliged for himself, as well as for the people, to offer sacrifice for sins.” Here again is a great dissimilitude of circumstances between the high-priest taken from among men, and our High-priest: for, though they have sins for which they are obliged to offer sacrifice, yet Christ had none: and in this a remarkably superior dignity appears in our Lord, that he was without sin, ch. iv. 15. and consequently did not, could not, offer for any sins of his own. See Lev. iv. 3. xvi. 32. xxi. 10. and ch. vii. 27.

Ver. 4. But he that is called of God,] Called of God means a particular designation or appointment to the dignity of high-priest; such a one as Aaron had, Exod. xxx. 30. They therefore misapply this text, who would argue from it the necessity of a peculiar appointment made by man to the administration of an office in the Christian church. How right soever such designations may be, this text has no relation to such matters, but is only intended to prove, that Christ was as eminently and as clearly designed and appointed by God to be a high-priest as Aaron was. In this respect, then, an equality of Christ to Aaron is proved: afterwards the infinite superiority of Christ, even in this respect, will be shewn.

Ver. 5. So also Christ glorified not himself] So likewise Christ did not take the honour to himself of being an high-priest.

“He did not of himself assume that dignity, but was expressly appointed to it by Him, who declared concerning him, that he was his Son.”

Ver. 6. As he saith also in another place,] The explication of this follows in ch. vii. The apostle had quoted from the second psalm in the preceding verse; when therefore it follows, *as he saith also in another* (for there is no word in the original for *place*;) it seems more natural to supply the word *psalm*, than *place*.

Ver. 7. In the days of his flesh,] During the time he was in the flesh; made lower than the angels, as man, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, ch. ii. 14. The allusion in the next clause is to the prayers of our Saviour, which he made in the garden to God, to remove that cup from him. See on Matth. xxvi. 39. Luke, xxii. 42. There is no mention any where of our Saviour's tears but in this place, except upon his raising Lazarus from the dead, John, xi. 35. and on his last view of Jerusalem, Luke, xix. 41. See also Matth. xxvii. 50. The last clause has been variously interpreted. The words *απο της ευλασειας*, mean not, *in that he feared*, but, as it is in the Vulgate, *pro reverentia*; by reason of that reverence and submission which was paid by the Son to his Father. So our margin has it, *for his piety*. The sense is, “That Christ, when he prayed to his heavenly Father in the manner he did, by reason of that reverential regard he had to his Father in all his conduct, was heard.” Thus Sykes, with whom Heylin, Bihop Fell, and many others agree; and I agree with them. See ch. xii. 28. However, Whitby, whom Doddridge and others follow, understands it, that he was heard in being delivered from that which he particularly feared; and which threw him into such an agony in the garden, that he sweat drops of blood. There is another method of interpreting this, which is that followed by the Syriac version; namely, by joining the words *απο της ευλασειας* with the 8th verse:—*and was heard* [so as to have his request granted; ver. 8. though he was a Son, yet through his piety he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Ver. 8. Though he were a Son,] Notwithstanding his being a Son, he learned obedience by that severe discipline which he underwent. The connection of this and the preceding verse seems to stand thus: “Jesus offered up prayers unto him who was able to save him from death; and he was heard too, by reason of the reverence and regard he shewed to his Father in all things; and he was accordingly rewarded. Yet notwithstanding his being a Son, — the only-beloved Son,—he learned obedience by going through a state of sufferings.” However, I humbly judge, that this obedience of Christ, in which he was improved by his sufferings and trials, must be understood agreeably to the scope of the discourse; wherein the apostle is designing to shew, that Christ acquired a sympathy with

us,

obedience by the things which he suffered ;

9 And ¹ being made perfect, he became
^m the author of eternal salvation unto all them
ⁿ that obey him ;

10 ^o Called of God an high priest after the
 order of Melchisedec.

11 ^p Of whom we have many things to say,

and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of
 hearing.

12 ¹ For when for the time ye ought to be
 teachers, ye have need that one teach you
 again which *be* the first principles of the bra-
 cles of God ; and are become such as have
 need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹ Luke, 13. 32. Ch. 2. 10. Dan. 9. 24. John, 17. 4. ^m Ch. 12. 2. Pf. 68. 18. If. 45. 17, 22, 24, 25. & 55. 4. & 49. 6. Mat. 1. 21.
ⁿ Theff. 1. 10. Pf. 72. 17. John, 10. 28. Ch. 9. 12. & 10. 10, 14. ^o If. 1. 19. & 55. 3. Zech. 6. 15. If. 62. 12. Luke, 1. 74, 75. Titus,
 2. 14. ^p Ver. 6. Ch. 6. 20. & 7. 15. 17, 3. Pf. 110. 4. ^p Mat. 13. 15. John, 16. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. 2 Pet. 3. 16. ¹ 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.
 Ch. 6. 1. & 10. 32. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2, 9. 1 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Cor. 5. 18—21.

us, and so was well qualified to be a high-priest for us. If we look back to ch. iv. 14, 15. we find he there speaks of our High-priest as the Son of God, who could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, being tried in all things like as we are, yet without sin. This made a vast difference between him and the priests under the law, who might be moved to a compassion towards their brethren, by considering their own *sinful* infirmities ; ver. 2, 3. Now Christ not being capable of being moved to compassion by this, (being himself always perfectly free from sin,) the sacred writer seems here to suggest, that he was yet as effectually moved to it another way, even by his own sufferings, in the course of his obedience ; and especially when he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The sense of the place therefore I take to be this, That by his sufferings he learned how difficult obedience was ; and by this means was as effectually engaged to pity and succour us, as the high-priests of old were to pity and act in behalf of the people, from the experience they had of their own strength and infirmity.

Ver. 9. Being made perfect,] Being consecrated, (see ch. ii. 10.) consecrated by sufferings to his office, and fully qualified for the discharge of it. But Archbishop Tillotson would translate it, *having attained the end of his race through sufferings*, that is, passed through sufferings in his way to consummate glory. Compare John, xix. 30. Luke, xiii. 32. Heb. ii. 10. See also Parkhurst on the word *τελειωσω*.

Ver. 10. Called of God, &c.] It is not the word *καλεσμενος*, as ver. 4. but *προσκαγορευεις*, having the title of high-priest given him of God the Father. He was not called to his office, as Aaron was, but he was something more ; and, which shews an infinitely superior honour in this respect, he was *saluted* with that title by God the Father himself. *Called after the order of Melchisedec* means, that Christ was called to be a high-priest after the order of Melchisedech, not by having a series of successors, nor by having his title founded upon any lineal descent ; but as acting in his office, without dependence upon, or attachment to any particular family.

Ver. 11. Of whom] That is, Melchisedec : “ Of whom “ we have much to say, and hard to be interpreted, so as to “ make you comprehend it, seeing you are *ωδιστα*, remiss, “ careless ;—have little or no desire to hear, or learn, or “ to attend to what you hear.” * See Eccus. iv. 29. xi. 12. Dr. Heylin reads the verse, *We have many things to say upon this subject ; things which it is difficult to render*

intelligible to you, because you are not in a disposition to apprehend them. The mention made of Christ's being an high-priest after the order of Melchisedec naturally led to the saying somewhat concerning that person, and his order of priesthood. This the apostle intended, and accordingly he has done it, ch. vii. But before he comes to that part of his discourse, he makes a large digression, from hence to ch. vi. 20. At the end of which he brings in again the mention of Christ being made a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec ; and thus concludes his digression, and introduces the account that he gives of Melchisedec in the 7th chapter. The design of this digression seems to be, *first*, to reprove the Hebrews for their not attending to, and not better understanding, the things spoken of in the Old Testament : his reproof being brought in upon occasion of their not understanding what was spoken concerning Melchisedec, seems to fix this as the ground of the reproof, and so may serve in some measure as a key to a good part of the present discourse. This is very pertinent to the grand aim of the epistle ; for a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament would have been very useful to establish them in their adherence to Christ. *Secondly*, another design of this digression seems to be, to warn the Hebrews of that to which they were very prone,—to doat upon the legal institutions ; by reason whereof they were apt to be indifferent to Christ, and to quit their hope in him, and the profession of his religion : for this cause the sacred writer sets before them their danger in the most lively and moving terms. He however qualifies his reproof by the commendation that he gives of some of them for their past behaviour, for which he encourages them to expect a reward from God. But he wishes the same might be made general, and that they would all of them guard against sloth and negligence, and press after perfection ; imitating the faith and patience of other good men, and particularly of *Abraham* ; for whom they had the highest veneration, and whose example was therefore likely to have the greatest effect upon them.

Ver. 12. For when for the time, &c.] The doctrines of Christ had been so long taught among the Jews, that they could not but understand the scriptures of the prophets, unless they were extremely obstinate, or careless and negligent. What the *first principles*, or the *very elements of the oracles of God*, were, appears from the next chapter, ver. 1, 2. namely the plainest and clearest principles and doctrines contained in the divine revelation. “ You have,” says the apostle, “ need even of those to be laid before “ you,

13 For every one that useth milk * is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that

are † of full age, *even* those who by reason ‡ of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

* Gr. hath no experience. † Rom. 7. 16. 17. & 3. 21. 2 Cor. 3. 9. & 5. 18—21. Eph. 1. 13. Titus, 2. 11—14. ‡ 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. & 14. 20. Eph. 4. 14. 1 Cor. 13. 11. † Or perfect. ‡ Or of an habit, or passion. 1 Cor. 2. 6, 15. & 3. 1. & 13. 11. Eph. 4. 13, 14. Philom. 15.

“you, rather than the deep things of Christ; that is, the doctrines which are suited to those who are mature in grace, or at least pressing after it.” See on 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

Ver. 13. *In the word of righteousness*: Every one who is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, is here called a babe: the thing intended is, that whosoever is ignorant of the righteousness of God without the law, which is witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus, unto all and upon all that believe, is only fit to be begun with, and to be taught the first elements of the oracles of God. This is sometimes called the righteousness of God, Rom. iii. 22. sometimes the righteousness which is of faith, Rom. ix. 30. The word of righteousness means, the doctrine of our being treated as righteous, in consequence of our faith in Christ. See Rom. iii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 19. It is called the righteousness of God, as it is the method that he has taken wherein to treat mankind; and as faith is the thing required as a means of his grace, it is the righteousness of faith, or by faith: and it is called absolutely the word of righteousness, as it is the great principle of the gospel of Christ.

Ver. 14. *Them that are of full age*, Τῶν τέλειων. So we speak wisdom to them that are perfect, τῶν τέλειων. See the note on 1 Cor. ii. 6. Those therefore who are here called of full age, are the same as those who by examination or information, are fully and experimentally acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel, or the great design of God in the dispensation of the Messiah; and who have by use and exercise been able to trace out what is good or evil, true or false. The expression of *having the senses exercised*, &c. seems only to refer to the metaphor which he had used before; and to mean, that they were not still children, who were incapable of doing this. It seems plainly borrowed from the Hebrew manner of describing children. See Deut. i. 39. Isa. vii. 15, 16. Jonah, iv. 11. The sacred writer might perhaps design, by thus enlarging, to keep them the longer attentive to the censure that he passes upon them. Instead of *by reason of use*, &c. Heylin reads, *by long practice and exercise have their senses improved, for the discernment both of good and evil*.

Inferences.—Behold the incomparable excellence and affecting endearments of Christ's priesthood! He, being as truly man, as God, has a more tender and effectual compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, than any of the ancient priests could have, who were beset with the same sinful, as well as natural infirmities with them; and therefore were obliged to offer sacrifices for themselves, as well as for the people: but as our sinful High-priest suffered in the days of his humiliation, to the greatest extremity, for the sins of the whole

world, but especially for those that perseveringly believe, he cannot but sympathize with them. With what fervency did he, in the most religious and submissive manner, apply to his heavenly Father for seasonable relief against those troubles, which could not but be very terrible to human nature; and how fully was he answered, with respect to the grand design of his prayer! As he was perfectly fitted by his sufferings for completing his priestly office, he is become the author of eternal salvation to all that yield themselves up by faith and holy obedience to him. How great is the honour which was put upon him as man; and his own condescension as God, in bearing this important office! He did not thrust himself into it; but it was conferred upon him by the express and immediate call of God his Father, as the Levitical priesthood was upon Aaron; and it is manifest what a divine and glorious High-priest he is, in that his Father said to him, *Thou art my Son to-day have I begotten thee; and thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*. Though he was the eternal Son of God, yet, adorable condescension! how freely did he accept the call to office-work, and experimentally learn obedience by his sufferings unto death! But, alas, how often are professing believers themselves too little apprehensive of the glories of Christ, as shadowed out by Melchisedec in various instances! They are apt to be so slothful and inattentive to them, that they cannot take in just sentiments of them; but when for their standing and advantages in the church, they might reasonably be expected to have such a stock of scriptural knowledge, as to be able to instruct others, they themselves need to be taught over again the very first principles of Christianity. But, blessed be God, there are provisions of all sorts in his word for every state and condition: there is milk for babes, and strong meat for those who are arrived at a state of manhood in Christ, and are more skilful in the word of righteousness, as by means of frequent use, and great experience, they are confirmed in habits of knowledge and grace, and have their spiritual senses exercised to discern the difference between what is good and bad, and to relish the one and refuse the other. How should this consideration excite us to the greatest diligence, that we may not always be like children in understanding; but may live upon such sublime truths of the gospel, as are suited to the nourishment of strong men in Christ!

REFLECTIONS—1st, We have,

1. An account of the sacerdotal office in general. For every high-priest taken from among men, under the legal dispensation, is of the same nature with his brethren, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, on their behalf to minister in holy things, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, according to the law, as the type and figure

C H A P. VI.

He exhorteth not to fall back from the faith, but to be steadfast, diligent, and patient to wait upon God, because God is most sure in his promise.

[Anno Domini 63.]

TH E R E F O R E ^a leaving ^{*} the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on

unto perfection; not laying again the ^b foundation of ^c repentance from ^d dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 ^e Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of ^f resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 ^g And this will we do, if God permit.

^a Phil. 3. 12—15. Ch. 5. 12—14. Eph. 4. 13, 14. 1 Cor. 14. 20. & 2. 6. 1. 10. 11. Mat. 7. 24. ^b Il. 55. 7, 3. Mark. 1. 14. Act. 2. 38, 39. & 3. 19. & 20. 21. 1 Pet. 1. 21. John, 14. 1. & 20. 31. 1 John, 5. 9—13. ^c Ch. 9. 14. Gal. 5. 10—21. Mat. 15. 19. R m. 1. 28—32. & 3. 10—19. & 7. 5. & 6. 21, 23. & 8. 6. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Rev. 3. 1. ^d Act. 9. 4—6. & 8. 16, 17. Mat. 28. 19. & 19. 15. with Lev. i—xvi. ^e See 1 Cor. xv. Mat. 25. 30—46. Rev. 20. 11—15. ^f Ver. 1. Act. 18. 21. James, 4. 15. 1 Cor. 4. 19. & 16. 7.

^{*} Or the word of the beginning of Christ. ^g Eph. 2. 20. 1 Cor. 13. 9. & 14. 6. & 15. 58. & 16. 13. & 17. 10. & 18. 1. & 19. 1. & 20. 1. & 21. 1. & 22. 1. & 23. 1. & 24. 1. & 25. 1. & 26. 1. & 27. 1. & 28. 1. & 29. 1. & 30. 1. & 31. 1. & 32. 1. & 33. 1. & 34. 1. & 35. 1. & 36. 1. & 37. 1. & 38. 1. & 39. 1. & 40. 1. & 41. 1. & 42. 1. & 43. 1. & 44. 1. & 45. 1. & 46. 1. & 47. 1. & 48. 1. & 49. 1. & 50. 1. & 51. 1. & 52. 1. & 53. 1. & 54. 1. & 55. 1. & 56. 1. & 57. 1. & 58. 1. & 59. 1. & 60. 1. & 61. 1. & 62. 1. & 63. 1. & 64. 1. & 65. 1. & 66. 1. & 67. 1. & 68. 1. & 69. 1. & 70. 1. & 71. 1. & 72. 1. & 73. 1. & 74. 1. & 75. 1. & 76. 1. & 77. 1. & 78. 1. & 79. 1. & 80. 1. & 81. 1. & 82. 1. & 83. 1. & 84. 1. & 85. 1. & 86. 1. & 87. 1. & 88. 1. & 89. 1. & 90. 1. & 91. 1. & 92. 1. & 93. 1. & 94. 1. & 95. 1. & 96. 1. & 97. 1. & 98. 1. & 99. 1. & 100. 1.

figure of him, who in his own person, as both High-priest and Sacrifice, should, in the fulness of time, offer the true atonement, and make the perfect reconciliation for sin, causing the persons and prayers of his faithful people to be accepted by the Father: *who can bear with, and have compassion on the ignorant, sympathizing with them; and having pity on them that are out of the way; desirous to bring them back again to God, and peace of conscience: for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity, and liable to every affliction under which his brethren groan. And by reason hereof, since he himself is a poor infirm creature and a guilty sinner, as well as others, he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer an atoning sacrifice.* But herein the surpassing glory of the great High-priest of our profession most eminently appears; for while, as partaker of the human nature, with infinitely greater compassion he feels for the erring and the ignorant, and stands to offer his all-prevailing sacrifice for them, he doth it purely on their account, not on his own, being himself without sin.

2. A divine appointment was necessary for the office of priesthood. *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, appointed thereto by the Lord's immediate order and authority. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, not assuming that honour in his human nature without a divine warrant; but he was solemnly called and qualified for this office by him, that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee; intimating the dignity of his person who was to be invested with the pontifical office. As he saith also in another place, (Pl. cx. 4.) Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec; an order prior and superior to that of Aaron; Christ having an eternal and unchangeable priesthood, ever living, and alone sufficient to manage all the concerns of his faithful people. Note; (1.) Before we presume to minister in holy things, we must produce a divine call, lest, intruding into an office for which we have no commission, we should expose ourselves to shame as intruders, instead of reaping honour by the service. (2.) The High-priest whom God hath himself appointed, we may be assured he will accept; and all our oblations in his hands shall be received as sacrifices of a sweet smell.*

3. We are told how he executed his office, and how effectual it was on the behalf of his faithful people. *Who in the days of his flesh, when here below, oppressed with manifold and severe sufferings, he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, especially in his*

agonizing struggle in the garden, looking up unto him that was able to save him from death, and from those exquisite pains which distressed his innocent soul; and was beard, in the support ministered to him, and in his glorious resurrection from the dead, in that he feared, with holy reverence submitted to his Father's will: *Though he were a Son, the eternal Son of the Father, and one with him in nature and perfections; yet, having condescended to take our nature upon him, learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; approving himself cheerfully submissive to his Father's will, and yielding himself up to death, even the death of the cross. And being made perfect, fully accomplishing by his obedience and sufferings the great work of atonement, and thereby being consecrated for the exercise of his priesthood in heaven; he became the author of eternal salvation, purchasing it by his blood, securing it by his advocacy, and applying it by his Spirit to the souls of all his faithful people,—a salvation not only from present guilt and corruption, but including all the blessings of glory everlasting, which are secured unto all them that obey him, and perseveringly follow him as the Captain of their salvation: called of God, and fully qualified for his office, as an high priest after the order of Melchisedec, ever living to make intercession for the faithful, and therefore a Saviour unto them to the uttermost. Note; (1.) God's adopted sons, like their great Head, are to expect sufferings, and under them to learn obedience and submission. (2.) None ever in the human nature endured any thing like what the Son of God hath suffered voluntarily for our sake: how dare we then murmur or complain? (3.) In his agony the Saviour prayed, to teach us whither we should look under all our distresses; and if with faith and fervour, as he did, we cry, we shall as assuredly be heard and delivered. (4.) The salvation which the Son of God hath obtained for his faithful saints, is complete and everlasting. He hath borne the penalty of sin, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law, that they might have all the benefit, and be entitled to the eternal reward of glory. (5.) All who hope to reign with him, desire to be ruled by him; and, cheerfully yielding themselves to his holy will, take up their cross, and follow the Captain of their salvation; and, unless we do this, our hope in him is but delusion.*

2dly, The apostle pauses for a moment, and stays the further consideration of the subject which he was upon, to introduce a needful rebuke of their dulness and inat-

4 For ^h it is impossible for those who were heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the ¹ once enlightened, and have tasted of the Holy Ghost,

¹ Ch. 10. 26, 27, 28. Mat. 12. 31, 32, 45. 2 Pet. 2. 20. 1 John, 5. 16. Ch. 12. 15. ¹ Ch. 10. 32. 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. Numb. 24. 3, 15, 16. ² 23. 10. Mat. 7. 22. Luke, 10. 17. 1 Cor. 12. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 12. Ch. 2. 4.

ention to the great things of God's word. Having mentioned a second time that remarkable personage Melchisedec, he observes, *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, difficult to be understood in themselves, and the more so to you, seeing ye are dull of hearing, slothful and negligent to search into the sacred oracles, that you might become more deeply acquainted with their important contents. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, considering all the means and advantages which you have enjoyed, ye have need, so little progress have you made in the school of Christ, that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, as the child must learn his letters in order to spell and read; and, rather declining than advancing in knowledge, are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat, as babes at the breast, instead of being in that state of manhood to which you should, ere this, have arrived. For every one that useth milk, and cannot relish or digest any thing beyond the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, is unskilful, and unexperienced in the word of righteousness, in the gospel, where we are taught how to walk and please God; for such a one is a babe in understanding and experience. But strong meat, the sublimer doctrines of truth, belong to them that are of full age, and may be styled perfect men; even those who, by reason of use, being experimentally and deeply acquainted with the blessed gospel, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, accurate to discover truth and detect error, and as eager to embrace and pursue the one, as to detest and avoid the other. Note; (1.) They who have long enjoyed the richest advantages, are expected to shew proportionable improvement in grace and knowledge. (2.) It is a great grief to ministers, and the sin and shame of their people, that, after years of labour, many of them have yet to learn the first principles of gospel truth. (3.) The scripture is suited to every state: there is milk for babes, and strong meat for men; it is the wisdom of a minister to be able to divide to every man his portion in due season.*

CHAP. VI.

ALTHOUGH in the latter verses of the preceding chapter the apostle had reproved the Hebrews for their ignorance of the first principles of the oracles, or ancient revelations of God, in which the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are contained, he told them here, that he would not now discourse of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but would carry them on to the perfection of Christian knowledge and experience, by explaining to them the deep meaning of some of the chief ancient oracles; not laying a second time the foundation of repentance from dead works, &c. as taught in the writings of Moses and the prophets, ver. 1, 2.—And because the Hebrews were in danger of being drawn away from the profession of the gospel by their unbelieving brethren, who founded their opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ on misinterpretations

of the Jewish sacred writings, the apostle told them, he would immediately lead them to the true meaning of the principal parts of these writings, if God permitted him to do it, by preserving them from apostatizing till they should have an opportunity to read and consider this letter, ver. 3.—In the mean time, to make them sensible of their danger, and to rouse their attention to those discoveries of the hidden meaning of the ancient oracles which he was about to make to them, he shewed them the pernicious nature of apostacy, and the severe punishment to which apostates are doomed, ver. 4—8.—Lest, however, his reprehension of the Hebrews, and his anxiety to preserve them from apostacy, might have led them to think that he suspected they were going to renounce the gospel, he mitigated the severity of his reproof by telling them, that he hoped better things of them, and things connected with salvation, ver. 9.—founding his hope on the righteousness of God, who would not forget those works of love which, with so much labour and danger, they had performed, and were still performing; to the persecuted disciples of Christ in Judea; nor withhold from them the aids of his grace necessary to their perseverance, ver. 10.—Nevertheless, he earnestly besought them to shew the same diligence as formerly, in performing charitable offices to their afflicted brethren, that his hope concerning them might remain firm to the end, ver. 11.—and not to be slothful in the work of their salvation, but to imitate the converted Gentiles, who, through faith in Christ, and patience under persecution, were inheriting, in the Christian church, the blessings promised to the seed of Abraham, in the covenant which God made with that father of believers, ver. 12.

Having affirmed, that the converted Gentiles in the Christian church were inheriting the promises in the covenant with Abraham, the apostle, to carry the Hebrews on to perfection, took occasion to enter into the deep meaning of that ancient oracle. And first of all, by his account of God's covenant with Abraham, it appears that the blessings promised in it, although expressed in types and figures, are the very blessings which are plainly promised in the gospel. Moreover, his care in this particular has been of no small use in silencing the adversaries of revelation. For, by rightly explaining the covenant with Abraham, the apostle has demonstrated, that the method of salvation by faith, the resurrection of believers from the dead, the general judgment, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, were all made known to the patriarchs and to the Jews, in that greatest of all the ancient oracles of God.

God's covenant with Abraham is often mentioned by Moses. But the fullest account of it is that which he has recorded, Gen. xvii. 4—8. where all the articles of it are related at large. The apostle, however, did not on this occasion call the attention of the Hebrews to that complete account, but to one more shortly expressed, which, he says, was confirmed with an oath. His words are; *When God*

5 And ^k have tasted the good word of God,
and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall fall away, ^l to renew them
again unto repentance; seeing they ^m crucify

^k Mark, 4. 16. & 6. 20. If. 6. 9. 1 Cor. 12. 10. Gal. 3. 2, 3, 5. Ch. 2. 4, 5.

^l See letter h.

^m Ch. 10. 29.

made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, saying, In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee. This account of the covenant is evidently that recorded, Gen. xxii. 15—18. where we are told that God spake these things to Abraham, after he had laid Isaac on the altar with an intention to sacrifice him. For, in no other passage of the writings of Moses, is God said to have confirmed any part of his covenant with Abraham by an oath, ver. 13, 14.—Concerning the promise, *In blessing I will bless thee*, it is to be remembered, that in the third and fourth chapters of this epistle, the apostle by a deep train of reasoning has shewed, that in this covenant God promised to Abraham and to his seed, a rest not only in the earthly Canaan, but in a heavenly country also, of which Canaan was a type. But if Abraham and his faithful seed were to be rewarded with the inheritance of heaven, it certainly implies that they were to be blessed with having their faith counted to them for righteousness. Wherefore it was not necessary that the apostle should enter more particularly into the meaning of the promise, *In blessing I will bless thee*.—But for the illustration of the promise, *In multiplying I will multiply thee*, he observed, that Abraham, after having patiently waited many years for its accomplishment, at length obtained it; namely, by the birth of Isaac. Nor was it necessary to say any thing more for the illustration of that promise; because, by leading the Hebrews to recollect the supernatural proceedings of God in respect to Isaac, they were taught that Abraham was to have a numerous seed by faith, as well as a numerous seed by natural descent. The reason is, the supernatural proceedings of God in respect to Isaac, were both an emblem and a pledge, that the power of God would be exerted in making Abraham the father of many nations, by producing in them the same spirit of faith with his; by the participation of which they would be more truly his children, than those whose relation to him was constituted merely by natural descent, ver. 15.

Farther, it is necessary to remark, that the apostle's design in mentioning the two promises which we have been considering, was not to give a full explanation of them, but that he might have an opportunity of declaring what God's intention was in confirming these promises with an oath, ver. 16.—namely, to shew to Abraham's seed by faith, whom the apostle calls *the heirs*, the immutability of his purpose to bless them by counting their faith to them for righteousness, and, we may also add, by bestowing on them, if faithful unto death, the inheritance of the heavenly country, ver. 17.—that by two, immutable things, the promise and the oath of God, in either of which it was impossible for him to lie, the heirs who, by the covenant made with mankind after the fall, have escaped from the curse of the law to lay hold on the hope of pardon and eternal life set before them, might have strong consolation, ver. 18.—This hope, the apostle assures us, the faithful of all nations have in every age of the

world, as Abraham's seed, for an anchor of the soul firmly fixed in heaven, called *the place within the veil*, because that place of the Mosaic tabernacle represented heaven, ver. 19.—Lastly, to shew that the great blessings of pardon and eternal life promised in the covenant are bestowed on Abraham's faithful seed through Christ, the apostle told the Hebrews, that Jesus, as our forerunner, has gone into heaven, there to plant for the faithful the hope of these blessings, on the ground of that most acceptable atonement which he made for the sin of the world by his death; and that he was well qualified to perform such a service for us, because by the oath of God, being made a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec, he was commissioned to enter into the holy place where God (the Trinity) manifests his presence, to make that effectual atonement for believers which God himself had prescribed, ver. 20.

The intelligent reader, no doubt, has observed, that the discourse in this chapter, is a proper sequel to the discourse concerning the sin and punishment of the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, and concerning the rest which remaineth to persevering believers, delivered in the preceding third and fourth chapters of this epistle; and that the three discourses taken together, contain such an explanation of the covenant with Abraham, as leaves us no room to doubt, that therein the principal articles of the gospel revelation were preached to Abraham and to the Jews, as St. Paul indeed has expressly affirmed, Gal. iii. 8. Heb. iv. 2. The covenant with Abraham, therefore, may with great propriety be termed, *The gospel of the patriarchs and of the pious Jews*.

Ver. 1. Therefore, leaving the principles] “Laying aside, comparatively speaking, the doctrines which were taught you when you were first initiated into Christianity.” The apostle means what in the preceding chapter were called the *elements*, or *first principles* of the oracles of God, ver. 12.—*Let us go on to perfection*, τελειότητα; “To that state of knowledge, experience, and practice, to which the following doctrines are designed to lead; searching with industry and diligence what the word of God has taught concerning Christ.” The τελειοι, *perfect*, are opposed to *babes in Christ*. See ch. v. 12. The *foundation* means, the doctrines taught men at first, in order to baptism into Christ. So St. Paul, *As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation*; 1 Cor. iii. 10. and in the next verse, *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*.—*Dead works* are no where mentioned but in this epistle, in the present verse, and ch. ix. 14. St. James indeed speaks of faith without works as dead, ch. ii. 17, &c. by which he means, that it is useless to him who has it; but here dead works are such as are not only useless and unprofitable, but as lead to death. They are such as God will punish with death. All sin exposes men to God's justice, and *the wages of sin is death*. Rom. vi. 23.

Ver. 2. The doctrine of baptisms,] Dr. Sykes and many others think the reason why the sacred writer speaks of baptisms

to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

7 " For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth

• If. 3. 10. & 55. 10—13. Song, 3. 11, 12. Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 29. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Gal. 6. 9, 10.

Baptisms in the plural number to be this: He writes to the Hebrews, who had not only several sorts of baptisms enjoined in and by the law, but who had had John, whom all looked upon and acknowledged, baptizing into the belief of one who was to come after him, and into a baptism of repentance. When a Jew was converted, he was baptized into the profession of Jesus's being the Messiah, he already believing in the other great preparative doctrines. When John made use of the rite of baptism to all such as became believers in the Messiah, who was soon to appear, he declared repentance to be necessary, as a preparatory work for all the blessings of the gospel: after this, our Saviour coming, declared the same, and baptized disciples in his own name, as being the Messiah himself actually come. When a Jewish disciple therefore was to be baptized, he was particularly to be instructed in the difference between the Jewish and Christian baptisms; and hence the apostle speaks here of the *doctrine of baptisms*. Lord Barrington understands this of the baptism of water, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles were initiated. He also explains the *laying on of hands*, as referring to the immediate communication of the spiritual gifts by means of the apostles. These he thinks were *first principles*, as *baptism* was the first entrance into the church, and *laying on of hands* the great evidence of it; and so repentance and living faith include the whole of Christianity; and a *resurrection* and *eternal judgment* are the great motives leading men under the grace of God to embrace it. Of *laying on of hands* must be understood as if he had said what was the *use* and *purport* of this practice; for anciently they were wont to lay on hands as soon as the persons were baptized, to give them the Holy Ghost; Acts, viii. 17. xix. 5, 6. Sometimes they used this ceremony to appoint persons to offices; Acts, vi. 6. xiii. 3. sometimes to heal, as Acts, ix. 12, 17. This custom then being so variously applied to such different purposes, it was explained to the person to be initiated by baptism.

Ver. 3. *And this will we do, if God permit.*] That is, " We will go on to teach those doctrines, with which a perfect Christian ought to be well acquainted;" this verse being in connection with the first clause of the first verse: and accordingly, the apostle goes on to represent Christianity in its highest beauty, usefulness, and glory. The next clause, *if God permit*, seems to have this force; " If God will give me an opportunity, and I am not prevented by your apostatizing from Christianity, before my epistle comes to your hands." When this verse is thus understood, the connection of it with the immediately following verses is perfectly clear, though otherwise very obscure; for by those verses he shews in what case he thought God would not permit him or give him an opportunity for this, or reason to expect success in his attempt.

Ver. 4. *For it is impossible, &c.*] " For your apostacy would put an end to my expectation of doing any good

" to you; it being impossible for those who have been once thoroughly enlightened in the faith, &c." It is thought by some, that we ought to soften the term *impossible*, and understand no more by it than this; that it is extremely difficult. But this interpretation may well be called in question, since, when our apostle speaks of the same case, without using the word here rendered *impossible*, he describes it in terms equivalent; setting it forth as desperate and remediless; ch. x. 26, &c. Besides, the circumstances of the sin were so peculiar, that we need not wonder that it should be as remarkably distinguished in its dreadful consequences. See the end of the note on ver. 6. *And have tasted of the heavenly gift*, signifies the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and revealed in the heart; so that the believer becomes a partaker of the Divine Spirit, and consequently of the divine nature, filled by our Saviour *the gift of God*, John, iv. 10. To *taste* this gift, is to perceive, to be sensible of the truth and power of such gift of God. Perhaps the word *tasted*, both here and in the next verse, is used by our apostle with a particular regard to the metaphor that he had used before, of *food*, or *strong meat*. To be thoroughly convinced and assured of the reality of our possession of this gift through Jesus Christ, is one of the strongest motives to make any one hold fast his profession. It may seem by the next expression as if every one who had embraced the *first principles* of Christ, or had been baptized into the Christian religion, had been partaker of some gift or other of the Holy Ghost; and in a large sense this may be admitted to be true: but if it be imagined that every Christian enjoyed some or other of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,—such as healing the sick, casting out devils, speaking with tongues, and the like; this seems more than fairly can be inferred from the present text. For though, in some places, to *partake of*, signifies to have a portion or share with others in common; (see ch. ii. 14. iii. 1. 14.) yet, if a person were convinced of the truth of the gospel, and converted to a saving experience of its power, by hearing the word preached, or by a careful study of the scriptures, accompanied with the aid of the Holy Spirit; or by seeing himself, or being fully satisfied of, the miraculous powers and assistances of the first preachers of the gospel, accompanied with the same divine grace; he might properly enough be said to be a *partaker of the Holy Ghost*. Instead of *were once enlightened*,—*were made partakers*, some read, *have been*, &c. &c.

Ver. 5. *Tasted the good word of God.*] That is, have been experimentally acquainted with the gospel, which through the spirit conveys to the believer remission of sins, justification, and sanctification here, and the promise to the faithful of a resurrection to eternal life hereafter. By *the powers of the world to come*, are meant, I believe, " the powerful or miraculous works of the Christian age;" *God bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost*, ch. ii. 4. *The world to come*, or rather *the age to come*, signifies the age of the Messiah; which was to last till the final consumma-

forth herbs meet for them * by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God :

8 ° But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing ; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, ^p we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

* Or for. ° If. 5. 6—24. Ezek. xv. Jer. 26. 6. & 44. 22. Mark, 11. 14, 21. Mat. 25. 41. Ch. 10. 27. 2 Theff. 1. 8, 9. ^p Ch. 10. 39. & 3. 1. Ver. 10. Phil. 1. 6, 7. with ver. 4—6. ^q Deut. 32. 4. Pf. 20. 3. Prov. 14. 31. Mat. 10. 42 & 25. 40. Mark, 9. 41. John, 13. 20. Rom. 13. 8. & 15. 26. 1 Cor. 16. 25. 1 Theff. 1. 3. ^s 2 Theff. 1. 6, 7. Ch. 10. 32—34. & 13. 3. Rev. 2. 2. ^r Rom. 12. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Pet. 1. 10. & 3. 18. Phil. 3. 8—15. 1 Tim. 6. 11, 12. ^t Ch. 3. 6, 14. & 10. 22, 35. Col. 2. 2. Gal. 5. 5. Phil. 1. 6.

tion of all things: it is the same with the *world to come*, ch. ii. 5. They who not only saw those great miracles whereby Christianity was confirmed, but were themselves empowered to work them, could not possibly have fuller evidence of the truth of it.

Ver. 6. *If they shall fall away,*] Two things are here to be observed; *First*, That the apostle speaks of such as not only fell away or apostatized from the genuine experience of the Christian, but also from the very profession of Christianity. This appears, from what he presently adds, to set forth the aggravation of their guilt,—that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. It is therefore very unreasonable, for persons to give way to despair themselves, or to drive others to it, by applying this text to other, and even the grossest sins, when it only relates to the case of an absolute and complete apostacy. *Secondly*, As the same thing is spoken of again, ch. x. 26, &c. it cannot be improper to compare the two places together, in order to a complete understanding of the apostle's design; and therefore from the other place we may explain this if: *If they shall ενωσιως, WILFULLY fall away.* We may observe further, that the word παραπεσοντας here used, not only signifies falling away, but “all sinning;” that is, all departing from the rule which ought to have been followed: and accordingly, the substantive παρανομια is commonly used for trespass or lapse. Here it signifies a total falling away from Christ; deserting the brethren, and withdrawing from religion in times of difficulty;—crimes hinted at toward the close of this epistle. To renew them to repentance, means inwardly to convince them again of the truth, and bring them afresh to an inward change and new birth. See Col. iii. 10. The apostle adds, *seeing they crucify to themselves, &c.* That is, “They treat Christ, as if they thought he deserved the sentence executed upon him; and thus they expose him to an open shame, and act as if they thought he deserved to be treated as he was.” It may be inquired, why the apostle speaks so severely of the condition of such apostates. Now the reason of this may be taken, partly from the nature of the evidence which they rejected: the fullest and clearest evidence that God ever designed to give of the truth of Christianity, was the miraculous operations of the Spirit; and when men not only experienced the genuine power of Christianity, but were eye-witnesses of the miracles wrought in those primitive times, and were themselves empowered to work them, and

10 For ^r God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end :

yet rejected all this evidence, they could have no further or higher means whereby they should be convinced; so that their case must in that respect be absolutely desperate. And, finally, this may be resolved into the righteous judgment of God against such men, for the heinous aggravated wickedness of which they are guilty. If, where men have not had the advantage of this highest evidence, but barely have rejected the love of the truth which they once enjoyed, God may, in many given cases, justly send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; there certainly must be much stronger reason for such a judicial proceeding of God against those who apostatized in the apostolic age, seeing their sin was so very great: and our author grounds this severe sentence upon the greatness of their sin, because they crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; and in the other place, because they do despight unto the Spirit of grace. See Parkhurst on the word Παρανομια.

Ver. 7. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain*] By this comparison the manner of the apostle's reasoning appears evident: those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, &c. are steadily to persevere in their duties; in which case they are just like good soils, which, being well watered, constantly bring forth good fruit, and are very justly said to be blessed by God. See Gen. xxvii. 27. On the other hand, those who fall away totally, are fitly compared to barren and unfruitful lands, which produce nothing, or what is worse than nothing, briars and thorns. This is a state exceedingly bad, which is at present, and will finally be more so, cursed by God. See John, xv. 6. Matt. xiii. 40—42. Isai. xxiv. 5, 6. Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

Ver. 9. *But, beloved, &c.*] This is exactly like St. Paul's way of closing and softening any thing that he had said which sounded terrible and dreadful. See for examples, 2 Theff. ii. 13. Ephes. iv. 20. Rom. viii. 9.

Ver. 10, 11. *For God is not unrighteous, &c.*] “I just now mentioned my hopes of your complete salvation; and I have reason to entertain such hopes, as well knowing the pious and benevolent dispositions which many of you have expressed. For God is not unmindful of his gracious promises, so as to forget your diligent work and labour in his service, animated by a principle of unfeigned love, which you have manifested,—not only to your brethren, but to his name also, in having ministered, and in still ministering, as his providence gives
“ you

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater :

and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath :

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us :

¹ Rom. 12. 11. ² Cor. 15. 58. ³ Pet. 1. 4—10. Ch. 5. 11. ⁴ Ch. 12. 1, 2. & 13. 7. & 11. 8, 13. Song, 1. 8. Pf. 45. 16, 17. ⁵ Gen. 22. 16, 17. & 17. 7. & 12. 3. Pf. 105. 9. Micah, 7. 20. Luke, 1. 73. Ezek. 16. 8. ⁶ Gen. xii—xxi. Rom. 4. 17—20. & 2. 7. Ch. 10. 36, 37. Hab. 2. 3, 4. ⁷ Gen. 24. 22. & 21. 23. & 31. 53. & 24. 3. Exod. 24. 11. Deut. 6. 13. Jer. 4. 2. ⁸ Ver. 12. Ch. 11. 7, 9. Gal. 3. 29. Rom. 8. 17. ⁹ Pet. 3. 7. Mat. 25. 34. ¹⁰ Pf. 33. 11. Prov. 19. 21. & 21. 30. James, 1. 17. Rom. 21. 29. Job, 23. 13. Mal. 3. 6. ¹¹ Gr. *interposid himself by an oath.* ¹² Numb. 23. 19. ¹³ Sam. 15. 29. Deut. 32. 4. Titus, 1. 2. ¹⁴ 2 Tim. 2. 11. Rom. 3. 3, 4. ¹⁵ 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2. & 49. 13. & 51. 3, 12. & 54. 1—17. ¹⁶ 2 Cor. 1. 3—5. ¹⁷ 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. ¹⁸ Numb. 35. 11. Gen. 19. 14, 17. If. 45. 22. & 60. 8. & 55. 3, 7. Esck. 33. 12. Zech. 9. 12. Mat. 22. 28. Rom. 8. 24. ¹⁹ 1 Tim. 1. 1. Ch. 12. 3, 2, 23—24.

you opportunity, to the necessities of the saints. And we heartily wish that this temper were as universal, as it is commendable where it prevails; so that every one of you, into whose hands this epistle may come, might shew the same diligence, and exert the same studious care, in order to establish the full assurance of your hope, even to the end of your Christian course; by which hope you must still be supported, while in this world." The word *παρηγορία*, rendered *full assurance*, whatever it is applied to, whether it be *faith*, *hope*, or *understanding*, implies such a fulness, as leads a man to act readily and determinately upon it. See ch. x. 22. Col. ii. 2. ¹ Thess. i. 5.

Ver. 12. But followers of them, &c.] He means such holy Christians as had persevered in their sincere profession of Christ, as well as such other faithful believers as had lived in a just expectation of his coming, and were now in possession of the promises made to Abraham, which were fully accomplished. The apostle therefore encourages the Hebrews to be imitators of those who had gone before them in faith and hope, since they now saw all the promises made good, and those who perseveringly believed in Christ in possession of that which had been so long expected. Mr. Peirce explains this of the *Gentiles* who were converted to Christianity. If it be intended as a hint to stir up the Jews to emulation, as he supposes, it is certainly a very obscure one; for, comparatively, it is a low sense in which Christians, in this imperfect state, can be said to inherit the promises. "I rather think," says Dr. Doddridge, "it refers to all good men departed out of our world, whether in former or latter days, and under whatever dispensation they died." Taking it in this view, (which, I am fully persuaded, is just,) it will be, as several have observed, an unanswerable argument against the soul's continuing in a state of sleep during the intermediate period between death and the resurrection.

Ver. 13—15. For when God made promise, &c.] "And a glorious confirmation you will find these promises to be, when you come to compare one spiritual object with another, and are better skilled in the method of in-

terpreting the sacred oracles, on principles which I am going to lay down. For I may, in the first place, lead you to observe, that when God made the great and comprehensive promise to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 2, 3, and xvii. 1—7.) on which so much of our hope as Christians does also depend, the promise that he would be a God to him, and that all nations should be blessed in his Seed,—seeing he had no greater a person to swear by, he swore by himself, even by the honours of his own sacred and divine name; saying, by an audible voice from heaven when he repeated the promise, while Abraham stood with Isaac before that altar on which with humble submission to the divine appointment he had just before laid him, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that blessing I will assuredly bless thee, and multiplying I will assuredly multiply thee; I will bless and multiply thee remarkably, so as to make thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.* And thus having waited long in humble faith and patience, he obtained in due time the accomplishment of the promise, first in the birth of Isaac, and then, after a much longer attendance, the consummation of a better hope. And we whose circumstances so happily resemble his in this respect, may well follow the example of his faith, when we survey the foundation of it."

Ver. 17. Wherein] Wherefore, or therefore: on which account. The word rendered *confirmed*, *επιβεβαιωσεν*, signifies properly, as in the margin, *interposed*; and so it is rendered in many versions.

Ver. 18. That by two immutable things,] "Namely, a promise and an oath, in each of which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, even we who in humble obedience to the gracious designs of his gospel, have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope laid before us, the noble prize which that gospel proposes as the great object of our ambition and pursuit." Dr. Heylin observes, that the word *παρηγοριον*, rendered *consolation*, signifies *incitement*, and

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that ^e within the vail;

20 Whither ^b the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, ⁱ made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

^f See ver. 17. Pl. 120. 7. & 42. 11. & 43. 5. Jer. 14. 8. & 17. 7, 17. Ch. 1. 3. & 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 9. 24. Rom. 8. 37. John, 12. 24. Rev. 3. 21. 210. 4. Gen. 14. 17—20.

^g Lev. 16. 15. Ch. 9. 3, 7, 24, 25. & 10. 10, 20. ^h John, 14. 2. Eph. 2. 5, 6. ⁱ Ch. 3. 1. & 9. 11. & 5. 6, 10. & 7. 1—17. Pl.

he observes, that the words in the next clause are figurative, yet clear, and highly instructive to those whom they concern; namely, they who have renounced the world, and its vain interests, and place all their happiness in being totally conformed to the will of God. The *hope* that this will one day be accomplished in them, is the *refuge* to which they necessarily fly: for without hope the mind can have no rest; and these persons having withdrawn their hopes from secular interests, the hope of salvation (that is, conformity to the divine will,) is their only refuge. A firm adherence to this hope keeps them steadfast in the boisterous sea of temptations wherewith they are agitated; for so the metaphor is continued in the next verse: *which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, &c.*

Ver. 19, 20. *Which entereth into that within the vail;*] The apostle means, that the hope set before us, is not limited to any thing temporal or present, but reaches to heaven and heavenly things; which he compares to the *holy of holies*, that part of the tabernacle which was behind, or within the second vail. Compare ch. ix. 3. *Into which* (ver. 20.) *Jesus is entered.* See ch. ix. 24. The sacred writer here alligns a very material difference between the high priest's entering within the earthly sanctuary, and Jesus our High priest's entering within the heavenly sanctuary. The Aaronical high priests did not enter the sanctuary as forerunners of the people, who were utterly debarred an entrance into it at any time: but Jesus is entered for us as a forerunner, and who will take care that all his faithful saints shall come after him into it.

Inferences.—In every respect, both with regard to knowledge and practice, let us *go on to perfection.* For this purpose, as Christians, let us remember what foundation has been already laid, of *repentance and faith, of baptism, of a resurrection, and a future judgment; a judgment, eternal in its consequences, and therefore infinitely important.* And let us remember, that as the building, in its highest advances, rests upon the foundation, and owes its stability to its union with it; so in like manner does our progress and advance in Christian piety stand in a near connection with our retaining *these* truths, though we by no means confine ourselves to them.

It is by a continual care to improve in them; that we shall most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of *apostacy*, to which we may otherwise be exposed. And O! let the *awful passage* before us be duly attended to in this view! Let us not rest in any *enlightening* that we may have received, in any *taste* that we may have had of the *heavenly gift*, of the *good word of God*, or the *powers of the world to come*, nor in any operation of the *Spirit of God* upon our minds. Men now have all these, and yet *fall away*, and their guilt become more aggravated: they may injure the Re-

deemer so much the more in proportion to all that they have known of him; and indeed will be capable of wounding him the deeper by their apostacy, and of *exposing* him to greater infamy. Let us daily pray to be delivered from so great an evil! We are not left to be like a *barren wilderness; the rain from on high comes often upon us*, and we enjoy the choicest cultivation: may we *bring forth fruits meet for him by whom we are dressed*, the genuine fruits of practical, vital religion. So shall we *receive a blessing from God*, and flourish more and more, till we are transplanted to the *paradise* above.

But as for those unhappy creatures who bring forth *briars and thorns*, let them dread that final *rejection* which will be the portion of those who persist in abusing the divine goodness; let them dread the *curse*, the awful, irrecoverable *curse*, to be pronounced on such; let them dread the everlasting dearth with which their souls shall be parched, when ordinances, when the workings of the Spirit of God, when the common comforts and supports of this mortal animal life, shall be no more. Gladly do the ministers of *Christ* entertain *better hopes* concerning those committed to their care, while yet there is room for hope; though faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men, obliges them to *speak* in the language of such *cautions* as these. May divine grace apply it to those who are particularly concerned in it; and plant what is now a barren and abandoned desert, with such *fruits of holiness*, as may transform it into the *garden of the Lord!*

REFLECTIONS.—Ist, The apostle,

I. Exhorts the Hebrews to advance in spiritual attainments. *Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, to a far more advanced state of grace and understanding; even to love God with all our hearts, and all our souls, and all our mind: not laying again the foundation, and continuing still to insist on the first principles of the Christian doctrine, but proceeding to greater heights in heavenly wisdom and holiness.* The principles that I speak of are those, (1.) *Of repentance from dead works*, implying a sense of the evil and danger of sin, the wages of which is death, an abhorrence of it, and the real conversion of heart from the love and practice of all iniquity. *And,* (2.) *Of faith toward God*, since all who come to him, must believe his being, attributes, and perfections; and especially that he is our reconciled God in the Son of his love, Christ Jesus. And these two principles of Christianity were typified under the Mosaic dispensation by *the doctrine of baptisms*, or divers washings prescribed to the temple worshippers, which signified the purification of the conscience, through faith in the blood of Jesus, and by the power of his Spirit, *and of laying on of hands*, for the receiving of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or as used for any other purpose in the Christian church.

5†

(3.) *And*

C H A P. VII.

Christ Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedech; and so, far more excellent than the priests of Aaron's order.

[Anno Domini 63.]

FOR this ^a Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met

Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation ^b king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace;

^a Gen. 14. 17—20.

^b With Is. 32. 1, 2. & 9. 6, 7. Pl. 45. 6, 7. & 72. 1—17. Jer 23. 5, 6. & 33. 15, 16. Micah, 5. Eph. 2. 14.

(3.) *And of the resurrection of the dead, which may be reckoned another first principle of Christianity. And, (4.) Of eternal judgment, when every man must appear to give account at God's bar, and to receive his sentence to be happy or miserable for ever, in body and soul, according to his deeds.* These having been so often insisted upon, we design to leave them to your serious reflection, and pass on to sublimer things. *And this will we do, if God permit.* Note; (1.) When the foundation of religion is laid, the superstructure must be raised in an increase of knowledge, grace, and holiness. (2.) All that we purpose must be undertaken in dependence upon God's support; for without him we can do nothing aright.

2. To quicken them to diligence, he sets before them the fearful case of apostates. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and so far received the knowledge of the truth as to experience the power of it, and have tasted of the heavenly gift in its genuine and divine consolations; and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, enjoyed the indwelling presence and witness of the divine Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God in its enlivening and regenerating influences; and of the powers of the world to come, enabled to perform many wonderful works; if after all this, they shall fall away from the gospel to Judaism, or Heathenism, the case is desperate, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, approving the wickedness of those who nailed him to the tree as an impostor; and put him to an open shame, by assenting in words or actions to the black calumnies of his murderers: apostacy, being a sin against the very remedy, cannot but be necessarily fatal.* Note; Satan will often seek to distress the souls of the sincere, when under darkness or temptation, with these terrible declarations; let it therefore be remembered, that it is never impossible to renew those unto repentance, in whom the Lord still awakens a desire to repent and turn to him.

3. The different states of the gracious soul and the apostate are here described. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; so the faithful heart, watered with the dew of divine influences from the Lord, brings forth the fruits of righteousness, which by Christ Jesus are acceptable and well pleasing to God, who blesses his own work, and gives a more abundant increase of every holy and gracious disposition. But that ground which after all the culture bestowed upon it, now beareth thorns and briars, is rejected by the owner as barren, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned: so where, amid the means of grace, unbelief and hardness of heart remain, or return, and after all their professions and experience men turn aside to error in principle, and*

ungodliness in practice, such are in God's sight reprobate, his curse lieth upon them, which soon shall be tearfully executed; when, cast into the belly of hell, they shall lie down in everlasting burnings which none can quench.

2dly, The apostle, from these awful warnings, passes on to the most powerful encouragements to steadfastness and perseverance.

1. He professes his good opinion of them, in general at least. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak; that you will never prove apostates, but, taking warning by the fatal examples of others, will perseveringly cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and holiness.*

2. He suggests the reason on which his confidence was built. *For God is not unrighteous or unfaithful to his promises, and therefore will not forget your work and labour of love, the genuine principle of all holy obedience, and assured proof of your interest in the blessings of the gospel; which love ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do continue to minister unto them under all their afflictions.* Note; (1.) Our love to God must appear in every work and labour of love for the good of his people. (2.) They who perseveringly give genuine proofs of their faith unfeigned, by a conversation such as becometh godliness, will find God faithful to his promises, and their bounteous rewarder.

3. He exhorts them to persevere. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, in every good word and work, your fruits of righteousness abiding and abounding, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, growing up to a more satisfied confidence of your interest in the eternal blessedness, invariably attached to your living Head and Saviour, and carried as a ship under full sails into the port of eternal rest.* See therefore *that ye be not slothful, but diligent in every means of grace, and in the duties of your calling, as followers of them who have trod before this holy path, and, through faith and patience amidst every trial, persevering unto the end, are now gone to inherit the promises in glory everlasting.* Note; (1.) If we have good hope through grace, we should seek to grow up to the full assurance of hope unto the end. (2.) Diligence in religion, as in every thing else, is the only way to thrive. (3.) The examples of those who are gone to glory before us, should encourage and quicken us to follow them.

4. The faithfulness of God to his promises, should engage their fidelity to him. *For when God made promise to Abraham concerning the Messiah, his future Seed, because we could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, to give him the strongest assurance of the fulfilment of the promise, saying, Surely, as I live, my being and perfections are engaged to accomplish my word, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying,*

3 Without father, without mother, * without end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

* Or without pedigree. † If. 7. 14. Jer. 31. 22. Luke, 1. 34, 35. Pl. 2. 7. John, 1. 14. Rom. 8. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Ver. 17. 25—28.

multiplying, I will multiply thee, so that thou shalt be a father of many nations, and on thy spiritual seed shall thy blessing descend to the latest ages. And so after he had patiently endured, through manifold afflictions, he obtained the promise of a son, the pledge of that Messiah who should descend from him; and at last departed himself in the faith, and entered the eternal world of glory. For men verily swear by the greater, solemnly appealing to God as the witness of truth, and avenger of falsehood; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife, this being judged the most solemn and decisive evidence which can be given to silence doubt, and terminate dispute. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, in condescension to our weakness, and to give us the utmost satisfaction with regard to his fidelity on his part in the accomplishment of all his promises: that by two immutable things, the promise and oath of God, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, filled with the sweetest delight, and supported under all our trials, who have fled for refuge, as the manslayer to the appointed city, (Numb. xxxv. 11, 12.) with eagerness, under an awakened sense of our guilt and danger, to lay hold upon the hope set before us, even Christ, the rock of his people's confidence: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; Christ, the object of our hope, being ascended into heaven, thither the grace of hope follows him, keeping the soul unmoved amidst all the storms of temptation: whither the forerunner, our representative, is for us entered, even Jesus the exalted Saviour, gone to prepare a place for all his faithful saints, made an high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Note; (1.) In Christ there is a refuge provided for the chief of sinners, and all who flee to him shall not only be safe but happy. (2.) In this tempestuous world we shall be hourly exposed to shipwreck, if hope do not enable us to ride out the storm, having cast anchor within the vail.

CH A P. VII.

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle proposed to go on with the Hebrews to the perfection of Christian knowledge and experience, demonstrated by arguments drawn from the ancient oracles of God; and accordingly in part he executed his purpose by shewing them, that in the covenant with Abraham God promised him a numerous seed, both by natural descent and by faith; that he promised to bless him and his seed by faith, with the pardon of their sins, with gracious foretastes of heaven here below, and with the inheritance of that heavenly country of which Canaan was the type; and that he confirmed these promises with an oath, to shew the immutability of his purpose to bestow on all those faithful saints the promised blessings. To this oath the apostle had appealed, chap. v. 6. in proof that Jesus is a real High-priest; but its import he did not then fully explain. Wherefore in the last verse of ch. vi.

having mentioned a second time, that Jesus was made an High-priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec, he, in this viith chapter, for the purpose of proceeding with the Hebrews still farther on toward the perfection of Christian knowledge, searched into the deep meaning of the oath, recorded Psal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec*; and by accurately examining the particulars concerning Melchisedec related in the Mosaic history, he shewed that Melchisedec was a far more excellent priest than Aaron and all his sons; and consequently, that Jesus, whom God made an High-priest for ever according to the similitude of Melchisedec, exercises a priesthood infinitely more acceptable to God, and infinitely more effectual for procuring the pardon of sin, than the priesthood which the sons of Aaron exercised under the law.

The first particular concerning Melchisedec mentioned by Moses, and taken notice of by the apostle, is, that Melchisedec was a *priest of the Most High God*. This implies, that he was appointed to the office in such a public manner, that all the worshippers of the true God in Canaan knew him to be a priest of the Most High God. And seeing, at that time, there was no visible church of God erected in which Melchisedec could officiate, his designation to the priest's office by God, authorized him to officiate every where, for all the worshippers of the true God who applied to him. In this respect, therefore, Melchisedec was a greater priest than Aaron, and than any of his sons; their priesthood being confined to the single nation of the Israelites.—The second particular mentioned by Moses, and referred to by the apostle, is, that Melchisedec was a *king as well as a priest*; so had authority to make laws for regulating the morals of the people for whom he officiated as a priest, and power to punish them for their faults. Accordingly, by the righteous exercise of his power as a king, accompanied by divine grace, he trained his people to virtue and goodness so successfully, that by his neighbours he himself was called *Melchisedec*, which signifies *king of righteousness*; and the city in which his people lived, was, on account of their virtuous and peaceable disposition, called *Salem*; which signifies *peace*.—Whereas the sons of Aaron, being simply priests, had no authority to make laws, nor power to correct the vices of the Israelites, for whom they officiated. Besides, many of them, instead of being righteous, were persons of a vicious and turbulent disposition, ver. 2.—The third particular concerning Melchisedec which the apostle takes notice of, is, that neither his father, nor his mother, nor his genealogy, is mentioned by Moses. From this it follows, that Melchisedec did not derive either his priesthood, or his fitness for the priesthood, from his parents, but had the office conferred on him immediately by God himself, on account of the excellence of his character, which he manifested under the grace of God.—It was otherwise with the Levitical priests: for although Aaron himself was *specially called of God, his sons*

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the

* Gen. 14. 20. Ver. 2. 6, 8.

* Act, 2. 29. & 7. 8.

* Numb. 18. 26. Deut. 18. 1. Joshua, 14. 2. 2 Chron. 31. 5, 6. Neh. 13. 10—12.

were not made priests by any particular designation, or on account of the excellence of their character, and holiness of heart and life, but merely by their descending in a right manner from parents who were priests. Levit. xxi. 7. 14. and by their being free from bodily imperfections, Levit. xxi. 17—21.—The fourth particular concerning Melchisedec taken notice of by the apostle is, that in the account given of him by Moses, he had neither beginning of days nor end of life as a priest, fixed by any law of God: so that he did not begin to exercise the priest's office at a determined age, nor cease to be a priest when superannuated, as was the case with the sons of Aaron; but exercised the priest's office all his life; in which respect his priesthood was well fitted to be a type of the perpetual priesthood of the Son of God, ver. 3. This circumstance, that Melchisedec was a priest all his life, joined with the former, that he was made a priest by God on account of the excellence of his character, and the holiness of his heart and life, shews that his priesthood had for its object to purify the minds of his subjects from sin through the aid and power of Divine grace; an office to which strength of body was not necessary, but maturity of judgment under the Spirit of God. Whereas the sons of Aaron, having for the object of their ministrations, to cleanse the bodies only, of the Israelites, from ceremonial pollution, by services which required great bodily strength, they were not permitted to begin their ministry till they were thirty years old, nor to continue therein beyond the age of fifty. See Num. iv. 3. viii. 25.—The fifth particular concerning Melchisedec, mentioned by Moses, and taken notice of by the apostle, is, that Abraham gave him the tenth of all the spoils of the vanquished kings, notwithstanding he was himself both a prince and a priest. This is a proof from fact, that Melchisedec's priesthood was not confined to one family or nation; but, for any thing we know, being the only specially appointed priest of the Most High God then in the world, he was an universal priest, ver. 4.—The case was different with the sons of Aaron. For they could not tithe all the worshippers of the true God every where, nor even all the Israelites, by virtue of their being priests; but they took tithes from their brethren the Levites only, and that by virtue of a particular commandment mentioned, Numb. xviii. 24—30. and they did this, notwithstanding the Levites were descended from Abraham equally with themselves: all which shewed the limited nature of their priesthood, ver. 5.—But Melchisedec, having no relation to the ancestors of the Levitical priests, was not authorized by any connection which he had with Abraham, either natural or political, to take tithes of him. Wherefore he received the tithes, merely because by the divine appointment he officiated as a priest for all the worshippers of God in Canaan, of whom Abraham was one.—The sixth particular concerning Melchisedec, mentioned by Moses, and taken notice of by the apostle, is, that Melchisedec, after receiving the tithes, blessed Abra-

ham, notwithstanding he was at that time possessed of the promises, ver. 6.—And, as the less is blessed of the better person, Abraham, by receiving the blessing from Melchisedec, acknowledged him to be his superior, both as a priest and as a king, ver. 7.—Farther, to shew the superiority of Melchisedec to the Levitical priests, the apostle observes, that here, under the Mosaic economy, priests *who die*, that is, whose priesthood expires when they arrive at a certain time of life, receive tithes; but there, under the patriarchal economy, Melchisedec received tithes; of whom it is testified, that he lived a priest continually, ver. 8.—Likewise he observes, that Melchisedec's superiority to the Levitical priests was shewn by this, that Levi and his descendants may be said to have paid tithes to Melchisedec in Abraham, ver. 9.—because Levi was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him. And since Levi derived all his dignity from his father Abraham, if by paying tithes and receiving the blessing Abraham himself was shewn to be inferior to Melchisedec, certainly his son Levi was in like manner shewn to be inferior to him, ver. 10.

Here the apostle ends his account of Melchisedec, without having pointed out any of the particulars in which he resembled the Son of God, except the one mentioned ver. 3.—that he was a priest all his life. Wherefore, that the reader may know in what respects Christ is a priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec, and be sensible of the propriety of God the Father's making the priesthood of Melchisedec the pattern of the priesthood of his Son, it will be fit in this place to compare the character of Christ with that of Melchisedec, as described by the apostle in this chapter.

And, 1. Like Melchisedec, Christ is a king as well as a priest. Being the eternal Son of God and the Creator of the universe, he is *the Heir or Lord of all*: consequently he has a right to govern mankind by the laws of his gospel, and power to reward or punish every one according to his works.—2. Like Melchisedec, Christ exercises his government for promoting moral and spiritual righteousness among his subjects. Accordingly, by his gospel he has reformed and regenerated multitudes of his subjects; and will continue to reign till he make truth and righteousness prevail universally among them; and such as are irreclaimable he will destroy. Wherefore, as his government is founded on a better authority than Melchisedec's, and is carried on with infinitely more success, the title of *king of righteousness* belongs more properly to him than to Melchisedec: also he is well entitled to be called *king of peace*, as he came from heaven to produce peace on earth, by reconciling sinners to God and to one another; and to make the reconciled, if faithful unto death, live with God for ever, in a state of perfect peace in heaven.—3. Like Melchisedec, Christ was not descended from parents who were priests, but he was made a priest by the special designation of the Father. And his priesthood is of a nature

people according to ^e the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham :

6 But he whose ^{*} descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that ^h had the promises.

^e Mark, 10. 15. John, 10. 34. Rom. 3. 27.

^{*} Gr. *pedigree*.

^h Gen. 12. 2, 3. & 13. 14—17. Rom. 4. 13. Gal. 3. 16.

so excellent, that as he had no predecessor, so he can have no companion nor successor in his priesthood. Nor is any such needed; seeing that he ever liveth to execute the priest's office himself.—4. Christ's priesthood, like that of Melchisedec, not requiring bodily strength, but maturity of judgment, to execute it properly, it was not limited to the prime of his life; but, like Melchisedec, he is a priest for ever.—5. As Melchisedec was appointed to exercise his priesthood in behalf of all the worshippers of the true God in the countries where he lived, so Christ was appointed to exercise his priesthood, not for any particular nation or race of men, but for all mankind. He is an universal priest. And, having offered himself a sacrifice for the sin of the whole world, he has thereby procured pardon and eternal life for all who are faithful to his grace, and makes continual intercession for them in heaven upon the strength of that meritorious sacrifice.

The apostle, in the preceding fifth chapter, to shew that Jesus the great author of the gospel has made atonement for the sin of the world, which is the fourth fact on which the authority of the gospel revelation rests, having proved that Jesus is a priest; also in this seventh chapter having displayed his greatness as a priest, by describing the character and office of Melchisedec according to whose similitude he was made a priest, proceeds, in what follows, to answer the argument advanced by the doctors for proving the efficacy and perpetuity of the Levitical priesthood, together with the unalterable obligation of the law of Moses. They affirmed the Levitical sacrifices to be real atonements which never would be abolished; that the law was given principally for the purpose of establishing and regulating them; and consequently that the law itself would always remain in force. But to shew the fallacy of this argument, the apostle enters into the deep meaning of the oath whereby Messiah was made a priest, reasoning thereon in the following manner: If *perfection*, that is, the complete pardon of sin and holiness, is to be had through the services of the Levitical priesthood, and if these services are always to continue, together with the law by which they were established and regulated, what need was there that another priest should arise of the order of Melchisedec, and not of the order of Aaron, ver. 11.—Certainly the introduction of a priesthood of a different kind from that of Aaron, implies that the services of the sons of Aaron are ineffectual for procuring the pardon of sin, and on that account are to be abolished. But if the priesthood is to be changed, it necessarily follows that the law also is to be changed, since its primary use was to regulate the services of the priesthood, ver. 12.—Now, that God resolved to change the priesthood, which by the law was conferred on the sons of Aaron, cannot be doubted, seeing that the person to whom God said, *Thou art a priest for ever*, was of a tribe of which no one ever officiated at the altar, ver. 13.—For it is very plain from Ps. cx. that our Lord Messiah, to whom God said, *Thou art a priest*,

being David's son, has sprung from Judah, to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood as belonging to it, ver. 14.—Farther, that the priesthood of the new priest who was to arise, was to be different from that of the sons of Aaron, is still more exceedingly plain from God's swearing, that, according to the similitude of Melchisedec, a different priest ariseth, ver. 15.—who is made a priest, not according to the carnal commandment of the law, which obliged the sons of Aaron to lay down their priesthood when fifty years old, because at that age they were not able to undergo those laborious services by which the bodies of the people were to be cleansed from ceremonial defilements; but who is made a priest according to the power of that endless life which is bestowed on him as a priest, because his ministrations being appointed for the purification of the minds of his people from the defilement of sin, required maturity of judgment and experience rather than bodily strength, ver. 16.—This God the Father himself testified, by saying to the Messiah, David's Lord, *Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec*, ver. 17. From these well-known facts, the apostle justly concluded, that it was always God's intention to abolish the law of Moses, after the weakness of its precepts to reform and regenerate mankind was made evident, and the unprofitableness of its sacrifices for procuring the pardon of sin was shewn, ver. 18.—The truth is, the law made no one perfect in respect either of pardon or sanctification; but the introduction of a better law and priesthood makes the faithful perfect in both these respects: by which law and priesthood we have access to worship God acceptably, at all times and in all places, ver. 19.

Farther, to shew that the gospel with its priesthood is an infinitely better covenant than the law with its priesthood, and that it was justly substituted in place of the law, the apostle, entering still farther into the deep meaning of God's oath constituting Messiah a priest for ever, reasoned in the following manner: Inasmuch as Jesus was made a priest with an oath, importing that God the Father would never abolish his priesthood, ver. 20.—whereas the sons of Aaron being made priests without any such oath, their priesthood was liable to be abolished, ver. 21.—it is plain, that by the immutability of his priesthood, Jesus has become the Mediator or High-priest of an infinitely more excellent covenant than the law. For if the weakness and unprofitableness of the Levitical priesthood were manifested by God's declaring his intention to abolish it, certainly the greater excellence and efficacy of Christ's priesthood are shewed by God the Father's having declared it unchangeable, ver. 22.—This the apostle illustrates more fully, ch. viii. by comparing the two covenants together.—I have only to add, that the apostle's reasoning on this subject is of such a nature, that while it shews the excellence of the gospel covenant and priesthood, it removes an objection which might naturally occur to the reader; namely,

7 And without all contradiction ¹ the less is but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is
blessed of the better. witnessed ² that he liveth.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who

¹ Gen. xxvii. xlix. Deut. xxxiii. Eph. i. 3. with ch. i. 4.

² Ver. 3, 16.

namely, that since the Levitical priesthood, which was as really of divine appointment as the gospel priesthood, has been abolished, what security is there that the latter shall not in its turn be abolished likewise? The greatest security possible! With a solemn oath God declared, in the hearing of the angelic hosts, that he has made the priesthood of his Son unchangeable.

In what follows, the apostle observes, that as the weakness of the Levitical ordinary priesthood was shewn by the priests quitting their office and giving place to others after their bodily vigour was gone, so the weakness of the Levitical high-priesthood was shewn by the high-priests being many in number, because they were hindered by death from continuing in their office, ver. 23.—But Jesus, because he liveth for ever in the body, possesseth a priesthood which does not pass from him to any successor, ver. 24.—Hence he is for ever able to save all, from the beginning to the end of the world, who come to God through his mediation; ever living as an High-priest to make intercession for them with God, ver. 25.—Lastly, he is such an High priest as the character and circumstances of sinners required, who, being absolutely free from sin, ver. 26.—has no need annually to make atonement for his own sins, as the Levitical high-priests were obliged to do, ver. 27.—For the law made men high-priests who were sinners; but the oath which was declared after the law was given, constituted the Son an High-priest, who is, in every respect, perfect for evermore, ver. 28.

These great discoveries concerning the dignity of Jesus as a king and a priest, and concerning the power of his government and the efficacy of his priesthood, the apostle was directed by inspiration to make, that by the frequent recollection of them, we may through Divine grace gladden and strengthen our hearts, under all the trials to which we are exposed during our present probationary state.

Ver. 1. For this Melchisedec,] The apostle had spoken of an high-priest after the order of Melchisedec thrice before, ch. v. 6, 10. vi. 25. and he had hinted, that *he had many things to say of him, and hard to be understood*; all therefore which has been said in the preceding chapter is a digression; from which he now returns, in order to explain what he meant by *strong meat*. He had proved before, that Christ was far more excellent than Moses; that he was as properly called of God an high-priest as was Aaron; and that the Christian rest was promised also to the Jews: and now he undertakes to shew the dignity and excellence of the Christian high-priest to be infinitely superior to and greater than that of Aaron, or the Levitical high-priests. The topics by which he proves this, are, that the same priest now abideth always, and does not die, as the Aaronical priests do; and that he has no sins of his own to offer for, as they had. Before he enters into this, Melchisedec and Christ are compared together, as being like each other in several circumstances. Both were kings of peace and righteousness, and neither of them deduced their right to

their respective priesthood from any succession: both of them exercised the office of blessing, as priests, and neither of them deriving their office from parentage, it follows, that no objection can be raised against the priesthood of the one, which does not equally lie against the priesthood of the other. See the notes on Gen. xiv. 18, &c.

Ver. 2. To whom also Abraham gave, &c.] Great as Abraham was, yet he gave tithes to, and was blessed by Melchisedec; and in consequence this priest was greater than Abraham; for, without dispute, he who receiveth the blessing, is inferior to him who giveth it. See ver. 7. *Melchisedec* signifies *king*, and *Sedeck*, *righteousness*.

Ver. 3. Without father, without mother,] No more is intended by this, in the opinion of most of the great expositors, than to observe, that the father and mother of Melchisedec are no where mentioned, nor are they pretended to be known; nor is any hint of his family taken notice of in the scriptures which speak of him. He was indeed *king of Salem*, that is, *king of Jerusalem*, as the Jews and ancient fathers commonly understood it. But it is no where said from whom he descended, nor who his parents were; or that he was of any line or family to which priesthood was annexed, as was the case of the Aaronical priests. As we know nothing of his birth or death, his parentage or pedigree (for he is said to be ἀγενεαλόγητος, *without genealogy*,—not enrolled among the priests), it is certain that no particular succession was necessary either to constitute him a priest, or to continue him in that office: for had that been at all necessary, something of that sort would have been mentioned. The next clause [*having neither beginning of days nor end of life*] is expressed for the same reason as the former words, in opposition to the Levitical priests, who were obliged to be of a certain age before they were admitted to minister, and dismissed the service at a certain age again. Numb. iv. 3—47. Had this been mentioned with any other view than to shew that succession was unnecessary to one who acted upon the footing that Melchisedec did, the apostle would not have said, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, but would have mentioned some period for beginning or ending his ministry; but designing only to shew that succession was not in the priesthood of Melchisedec, he observes, that neither beginning nor end is mentioned at all; and consequently that the Melchisedechian priesthood had this advantage over the Aaronical, as not being liable to change. Lists of genealogies were always kept among the Jews, that it might appear how every one was descended: nor could any one be admitted to act as a priest, unless he could prove his descent not only from the tribe of Levi, but from the family of Aaron: but Melchisedec was a priest of God, like the Son of God in this respect, who had no genealogy from which his privilege of acting in the sacerdotal office was derived. Nor is there any mention of any alteration or change of his office by death, nor any successors to him specified; wherefore those that are priests

receiveth tithes, ¹ paid tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11 ^m If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was*

there that another priest should rise ⁿ after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

¹ Gen. 14. 20. Acts, 7. 8. ^m Ver. 18, 19. Ch. 10. 1, 2. & 8. 7, 8, 10. Gal. 3. 21. 17, 21. Gen. 14. 17—20. with Exod. xxviii. Lev. viii. ix. i—xvi. xxiii. Numb. xv. xxviii. xxix.

ⁿ Ps. 110. 4. Ch. 5. 6, 10. & 6. 20. Ver. 3, 15,

as he was, abide priests for ever. Some would read this last clause, *like unto the Son of God, who abideth a priest continually.*

Ver. 4. Now consider how great this man was,] *How great he,—this person, was.* Heylin. “He was superior to Abraham, for he *blessed him*; and he was superior to Levi, or any son of his, since (if I may be allowed so to say) *they paid tithes in Abraham*,” ver. 9. This is a severe stroke upon the Jews, not only as it proves the superior dignity of Christ above the Aaronical priesthood, but shews also that God had of old a people among the Gentiles, and that there was a person among them superior to Abraham himself.

Ver. 5. To take tithes, &c.] *According to the law, to take tithes of the people, that is, of their brethren.* Our author’s design is to magnify the priesthood of Melchisedec: in order whereto he magnifies the dignity of the Levitical priesthood, and then shews that the other, of Melchisedec, was to be preferred to it. Thus stands his argument: “It was a great honour conferred on the Levitical priesthood, that they were empowered to receive tithes of the whole nation who were their brethren; and this honour appears yet the greater, when it is considered that these their brethren came out of the loins of Abraham, the friend of God; for whom, and whose posterity, God had a particular regard, as appears by his promises; and who, therefore, it might be expected, should be exempted from such a burden. But Melchisedec appears to have had a yet much more honourable priesthood, because he received tithes of one who was not of his brethren, even of Abraham himself,—which shews him to be greater than Abraham,—and with a priestly authority blessed him: and hereby, in effect, he received tithes of Abraham’s posterity, even of Levi, and that tribe which descended from him.” This gives a satisfactory account of the word *although*, which at the first reading seems obscure.

Ver. 6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them*] This sufficiently explains what is meant in the preceding verses by Melchisedec’s being said to be *without father or mother*: his descent or genealogy was not derived either from Abraham’s line, or from any other; but, such as he was, he exercised the priestly office, and *blessed him that had the promises.*

Ver. 7. *The less is blessed of the better.*] That is, *The inferior is blessed of the superior.*

Ver. 8. *And here men that die, &c.*] *Here* [according to the law] *men that die take tithes; but there,* [in the case of Melchisedec,] *he, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.* As to the single point of taking tithes, the case was the same

both with the Levitical priests and with Melchisedec: but the difference here considered, is that of men who *die*, and of one of whom *it is witnessed that he liveth.* Men that died had their successors, to whom tithes were regularly and constantly paid; but Melchisedec is not said to have any successor, but *was himself* to continue a priest for ever. So much then as a priesthood for ever is superior to a successive priesthood, so much must that of Melchisedec excel that of Aaron.

Ver. 9. *And as I may so say,*] Elsner is of opinion, that this should be translated, *to say the truth*; and he produces some passages out of the classics to vindicate this version.

Ver. 11. *If therefore perfection, &c.*] *But if, or now if perfection had been.* The Levitical priesthood was appointed, when the law was given to the Jews. But could perfection have been had by the priesthood appointed under the law, or had that been the design of it, the scriptures would have had no occasion to mention another priest. And yet we find in David’s time, 400 years after the giving of that law, which was received under the Levitical priesthood, mention is made of a *priest after the order of Melchisedec*, who was to continue for ever. Why should this new priest be mentioned at all? Or why be said to be *after the order of Melchisedec*? or why not after the order established, if that had been intended to bring men to perfection? The truth is, the priesthood of the law was designed for a particular purpose during the law, and not to give remission of all sins, or to bring men to perfect happiness. See ch. ix. 9. x. 1.

Ver. 12. *For the priesthood being changed,*] Another priest arising, there must be a change of the priesthood; but how does it follow that there must be a *change of the law*? For though the priesthood admitted an alteration, might not the law, as to other points, have continued the same? The truth is, so much of the law concerns the priesthood immediately,—all their sacrifices, oblations, purifications, their great day of atonement, and in short all their temple service,—that, supposing those to have been abolished or set aside, their *law* itself might properly be said to be *changed*. But there is a still juster reason for this inference of the apostle: the law had promised temporal blessings to its observers, and had denounced as severe curses on such as disobeyed it; and as there could not, in the nature of things, but be frequent lapses and deviations from obedience, a priesthood was appointed, and a method of expiation by means thereof, to restore the offenders to what they had no right to, but by obedience. If therefore the priesthood was changed, the means of atonement were taken away; and the promises annexed only to obedience, or to propitiation, were void, or of no effect at all; and in consequence,

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest;

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the

commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, * but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And in as much as not without an oath he was made priest;

21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec);

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

* Gen. 49. 10. 11. 7. 14. & 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 33. 15, 16. Mat. 1. 3, 16. Luke, 3. 33. Rom. 1. 3. 2 Tim. 2. 8. Rev. 5. 5. & 22. 16. ...

sequence, the law itself was insignificant and useless, and must be either changed or abolished quite, the end of it in this respect being wholly lost. See the next note, and on ver. 15—17.

Ver. 13. For he of whom these things are spoken] Namely, the Christ, who was to be of the order of Melchisedec. This is another reason why the law was to be changed; for the priesthood being designed, not to be in the tribe of Levi, to which the law of Moses had absolutely and entirely fixed it, the change of the priesthood to one of another tribe must necessarily make a change in the law. Now Christ being the person all along designed to be this new priest, and he descending from Judah, the law itself, which confines its precepts to priests of the family of Abraham, must of consequence be changed.

Ver. 14. That our Lord sprang out of Judah;] It may be worth remembering here, that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom, refer to the table made at the taxation in proof of this; and it may be considered whether the apostle does not insinuate the same reference. Undoubtedly he would not have spoken in the manner that he does, if it had not been generally allowed. Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood, as belonging or relating to that tribe of Judah.

Ver. 15—17. And it is yet far more evident;] "And, independent on all genealogical controversy which the most ingenious malice could urge concerning Mary's family, it is yet more abundantly manifest that the law must be changed, from the least attention to that scripture alone, so frequently mentioned, That, or inasmuch as another priest ariseth according to the similitude of Melchisedec. For, let the priesthood be in any tribe, it can continue according to the legal establishment only for the natural life of a man: and then provision is made

"for a successor: but the priesthood according to the similitude of Melchisedec admits of no such thing as succession, but is for an indissoluble life. A carnal commandment here is opposed to a power of living for ever; a carnal commandment therefore is a law that concerneth the flesh which dies; whereas a priesthood for ever does not depend upon flesh, which, in the common course of things, soon comes to an end." The apostle, therefore, is not speaking of the law as enjoining sacrifices, or any other external worship; but of the necessity of the law of Moses being changed, since a priest was to arise of a different sort, who was to live for ever;—as he infers from the words of the Psalmist, Thou art a priest for ever, &c. Dr. Heylin renders the 16th and 17th verses thus: Who is not established according to the law of a carnal succession, but according to the power he has to live for ever: As the scripture testifieth in these words, Thou art a priest for ever, &c.

Ver. 18, 19. For there is verily a disannulling] "For there is an abrogation of the former commandment, concerning the Levitical priesthood, upon account of the weakness and unprofitableness of it: For the law made nothing perfect, and consequently could not make the priesthood so, or confer those advantages which were to be expected by that office; but there is the bringing in of a better hope, by a more perfect priest, through which we Christians draw nigh to God." See ver. 25.

Ver. 20—22. And in as much, &c.] The apostle produces here another argument to prove the superior excellence of the new covenant above the law of Moses; or rather, the superior dignity of the priesthood of Christ, above that of the Levitical priesthood. The reasoning is this: "The more solemn and awful the manner is, in which any one is appointed to his office, the more important in general

23 And ^c they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death :

24 But this man, ^d because he continueth ever, hath an * unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore ^e he is able also to save them † to the uttermost that come unto God by him, ^f seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 ^g For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from finners, ^h and made higher than the heavens :

27 Who needeth not daily, as ⁱ those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests

^c 1 Chron. vi. xxiv. Ezra, 2. 36—39. Neh. 7. 39—42. & 10. 2—8. & 11. 10—14. & 12. 1—21. & 6. 9. Rev. 1. 18. John, 12. 34. with ver. 1, 3, 17, 21, 23, 28. Pf. 110. 4. Ch. 13. 8. * Or which passeth not from one to another. † Or evermore. ^f Rom. 8. 34. Ch. 45. 22. & 63. 1. John, 10. 7, 9, 10. & 14. 6. Eph. 2. 13, 18. 1 Tim. 2. 5. John, 6. 37, 40—57. † Or evermore. ^f Rom. 8. 34. Ch. 9. 24. 1 John, 2. 1, 2. Rev. 8. 3, 4. ^g Exod. 28. 36. & 29. 1. Lev. viii. ix. xxi. & 22. 4—6. If. 53. 9. Luke, 1. 35. Acts, 3. 14. & 4. 27. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 22. & 1. 19. Ch. 9. 12, 14. ^h Mark, 16. 19. Luke, 24. 51. Acts, 1. 9. & 3. 21. Rom. 8. 34. Ch. 1. 3. & 4. 14, 15. & 2. 10. & 8. 1. & 9. 24. & 10. 12—14. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Eph. 1. 20—22. ⁱ Lev. 9. 7. & 4. 3. & 16. 6, 11. Rom. 6. 10. Ch. 1. 3. & 5. 3. & 8. 3. & 9. 7, 12, 28. & 10. 12, 14. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. 2 Cor. 5. 21:

“ general is the office: now God engaged himself by oath, in constituting Christ a priest; which he did not in the case of making the Levitical priests. And then, as to the covenant itself, that covenant is generally the best, which is most solemnly engaged in by the party who makes it: but the covenant made by Jesus was more solemnly engaged in than the covenant made by Moses; therefore it was a better covenant. Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Here he is called the surety, sponsor, or engager, that the conditions shall be observed by him from whom they were brought. If God then enters into a covenant, and promises eternal life upon the conditions of repentance, faith, and holiness, and sends his only-begotten Son to offer this salvation, and to ratify the whole by his atoning Blood, and to assure mankind of God the Father’s gracious disposition to them, if they will yield to be saved by his free unmerited grace; and if we find by comparing what is contained in the Old Testament, that God had sworn by himself that he would send such a person;—one cannot but infer that the Christian dispensation is infinitely more excellent than that, which was given or made without these solemnities and most glorious accompaniments.”

Ver. 23, 24. And they truly were many priests,] And as to these priests, there were many of them established successively, because death prevented their continuance; ver. 24. But he, eternal as he is, hath a priesthood, which cannot be transferred to others. By means of his continuance for ever, our High-priest exerciseth an unchangeable priesthood.

Ver. 25: Wherefore, &c.] Whence, or on which account, he is able to save us τὸ πᾶσι, completely, perfectly. The apostle is speaking of a complete and perfect salvation, which is to last for ever, in opposition to what the Levitical priests could give by any annual expiation, which extended no further than the law promised. Christ living for ever himself, could save for ever them that come to God through him. The word ἐπιπαύειν, rendered to make intercession, signifies to go to, to meet, to converse with any one. When the phrase is ἐπιπαύειν πρὸς, it signifies to speak for any one; as the phrase ἐπιπαύειν κατὰ is to speak against any one. Christ therefore ever living, and being in heaven in the presence of God the Father, can at all times inter-

pose for us, and not as the Jewish high-priests, who had access to God’s peculiar presence but once a-year. St. Paul has made use of this same expression, Rom. viii. 34. We may observe further, that it is not only for the present generation of men who embrace the offers of his mercy, that our Saviour intercedes,—as it was only the offenders of the present year for whom the Jewish high-priest could intercede;—but it was for future generations, as well as present, that he could intercede, because he continueth for ever, and is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him.

Ver. 26—28. For such an high priest became us,] “ For such an high-priest suited us,—was proper for us,—as was perfectly holy; that is, in a life quite pure; free from all sin, unpolluted.”—The high-priest who was polluted in a legal sense under the Mosaic law, could not officiate.—Separate from sinners: our Saviour conversed freely with sinners; Matth. ix. 10—13. and he professed it to be his business to bring them to repentance, by instructing them in the doctrines of his divine religion. But then he did not partake with them in their sins;—he did no sin: 1 Pet. ii. 22. He kept himself separate from them in all such acts as gave men the denomination of sinners.—Made higher than the heavens, is a sublime expression, which seems to be taken from Pf. cxiii. 4. 6. and implies that our blessed Lord was in his nature infinitely superior to the noblest angels, and consequently an high priest infinitely preferable to the Jewish high-priests; nay, infinitely preferable even to Aaron himself. See ch. viii. 1. The apostle is speaking of high-priests as acting in the course of the anniversary expiation; and his argument is, that our High-priest being made higher than the heavens, has no occasion continually to offer sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s sins; for this latter he did once for all, when he offered up himself a spotless and acceptable sacrifice to God. The word ἑπάναξ, once, or free for all, is clearly set in opposition to once every year; and therefore the construction should seem most natural, that as the high-priest was obliged to repeat every year his oblation, Christ had no occasion to repeat his at all; but he did what was necessary once for all, when he offered up himself. The pronoun this is not to be extended to the whole of what is said in the former part of this verse, but only

* which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is * consecrated for evermore.

* Ch. 5. 1, 2. Lev. 4. 3. & 9. 7. & xxi.

¹ Ch. 2. 10. & 4. 14. & 5. 6, 9, 10. & 7. 3, 17, 21, 25. Pl. 110. 4.

² Gr. *perfected*.

to the words *for the people's sins* ; for he himself was without sin, and therefore could not offer for his own sins, as the high priest was obliged to do. Consider how the apostle's argument stands in these two verses. He here asserts two things, which Christ had no need to do, though they were done by the Jewish high-priests ; *first*, to offer sacrifice from time to time for his own sins, — for he was *holy, harmless, &c.* and, *secondly*, to offer sacrifice from time to time for the sins of the people. The reason and evidence of the former he declares in ver. 28. *for the law, &c.* The *for* here must connect this with something that went before, which cannot be the last clause of ver. 27. it must therefore (as indeed the nature of the argument shews,) relate to his not needing to offer sacrifice for his own sins ; for it is an assertion that he had none. The law made those high-priests *who have sinful infirmity*, and consequently need to offer sacrifice for it ; *but the word of the oath which was in David's time, and so since the giving of the law, maketh the Son an High-priest, who is perfected for evermore*, living for ever in heaven, and who must consequently be for ever free from all infirmities. This connection seems very clear, and the clause *for this he did once, when he offered up himself*, should be read in a parenthesis ; for the apostle designing to treat again of his offering for the sins of the people, passes it over more slightly : (see ch. ix. 12. x. 10 — 14.) and when he says, *this he did once*, This refers entirely to the nearest antecedent ; — the offering for the sins of the people. And as the word *τετελειωμένον* stands opposed to *having infirmity*, (that is, sinful infirmity, for which there was need to offer sacrifice,) it is much better rendered *perfected*, as in the margin, — or free from all infirmities ; and the expression, in this view, is nervous and strong, — *the Son who hath been perfected for ever* ; that is, “ who is and was from all eternity the same divine, perfect, and holy person.”

Inferences.—How transcendently excellent is the priesthood of Christ, as it is after the order of Melchisedec, and confirmed for ever by the oath of God himself ! Melchisedec, as an extraordinary priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham, who paid tithes to the superior priest. But how much more eminent a Priest, as well as King of righteousness and peace, is the Son of God than Melchisedec ! He was only in type what Christ is in reality, without beginning of days or end of life ; without any earthly father according to the flesh, and without any mother according to his divine nature ; and an eternal High-priest of such perpetual power and complete acceptance with his Heavenly Father, according to the energy of his immortal life, as supercedes the want of any other to make atonement either for believing Jews or Gentiles. And how different from, and incomparably more excellent is his priesthood, than that which was appointed by the law of a carnal commandment ! He sprung, not from the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, which never had, by divine institution, any share in the high-priest's office after the order of Aaron,

who, and his sons, were merely mortal men, and in their turns died out of their office, and were succeeded by others of their line ; and they all had sins of their own to atone for, before they could offer a sacrifice for the sins of Israel. But Christ being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, could have no occasion to offer any propitiatory sacrifice on his own account. And, as he never died out of his office ; so, being made higher than the heavens, he continually and completely exercises it alone by himself, without any predecessor or successor in it. This change of the priesthood naturally brought on an abolition of the law to which it belonged, on account of the insufficiency of that law and priesthood to perfect the worship and happiness of the church ; and introduced the gospel state, which depends upon, and derives the most substantial efficacy from, the priesthood of Christ. What infinitely better grounds of hope have we in him, and in the gospel of the grace of God through him, than ever could have been had by the law ! And with what humble confidence, and happy success, may the believing sinner now approach God in Christ ! He is the Surety of the new covenant, to undertake with God his Father, that all requirements should be answered in order to a secure accomplishment of its great and precious promises for all his faithful saints ; and he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, since he ever lives as a righteous Advocate, to make intercession for them.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Thrice had the apostle quoted the testimony borne to the Son of God out of the Psalms, as an High-priest after the order of Melchisedec : of this remarkable person he here gives an account, and we may herein trace the resemblance that he bore to his great antitype.

1. His name was Melchisedec, or king of righteousness, the figure of him on whose shoulders the universal government should rest, who, with the most distinguished rectitude, should administer the affairs of his kingdom, and is the author of everlasting righteousness to his faithful people.

2. He was *king of Salem*, that is of *peace*. So Christ is eminently the prince of Peace, having procured it for us by his blood, applying it by his Spirit, and setting up his throne of peace within our hearts.

3. He was said to be a *priest of the most high God*. So was Jesus consecrated to this office by his Father, and through his sacrifice alone can we obtain reconciliation and acceptance with God.

4. He blessed Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, as his superior. And as Abraham gave him a tenth of all, he must needs be a priest of a higher rank and order than Levi or Aaron who descended from this patriarch ; and thus has our incarnate Lord a priesthood infinitely excelling the Aaronical, and of far more extensive influence, ministering in behalf of Gentiles as well as Jews.

5. Mel-

C H A P. VIII.

By the eternal priesthood of Christ, the Levitical priesthood of Aaron is abolished; and the temporal covenant with the fathers, by the eternal covenant of the gospel.

[Anno Domini 63.]

NOW of the things which we have spoken
this is the sum: ^a We have such an

high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

² ^b A minister * of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

³ ^c For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is of*

^a Ch. 1. 3, 13. & 3. 1. & 4. 14. & 5. 6, 10. & 6. 20. & 7. 3, 11, 17, 21, 26, 28. & 9. 11, 24. & 10. 12. & 22. 2. Col. 3. 1. Eph. 1. 20. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Pl. 110. 1, 4, 5, 7. ^b Exod. 30. 20. Lev. 16. 15. Ch. 9. 8, 11, 24. & 10. 21. Rom. 15. 8. ^c Or of holy things. ^d Ch. 9. 11. John, 1. 14. Mat. 1. 20. Luke, 1. 35. ^e Exod. xxviii. xxix. Lev. xvi. with ch. 5. 1. & 7. 27. & 9. 14. & 10. 11. Eph. 5. 2, 25. Titus, 1. 14. Mat. 20. 28. 1 Tim. 2. 6.

5. Melchisedec's original is entirely concealed; no mention is made of his father or mother, of his birth or death, of the beginning or end of his priesthood, that he might more strikingly represent the Son of God, who abideth a priest continually, and everlastingly to exercise his office on the behalf of his faithful people, without predecessor, partner, or successor, alone appearing before the throne, and ever living to make intercession for them.

2dly, To guard the Hebrews from their attachment to the abolished priesthood of Levi, and lead them to the great High-priest of their profession, Christ Jesus, he shows his surpassing excellence above Aaron or his sons. (1.) Because they being in Abraham's loins, paid tithes to Melchisedec; and though commissioned afterwards to receive tithes of their brethren, yet virtually now, as included in their father, they paid tithes to this priest of God, and thereby acknowledged him as their superior who was but the type of our Lord. (2.) Because the less is blessed by the greater. And herein therefore Abraham himself, though favoured with such distinguished promises, was inferior to Melchisedec; and how much more must his sons that should descend from him be? and much more excellent still than they, must he then be, of whom Melchisedec was only the representative! (3.) They were all dying men, and the succession and descent of the sons of Levi are well known; but Melchisedec's generation is concealed; we only hear of him that he liveth, as the figure of him who really hath an unchangeable priesthood, and actually lives for ever to intercede on the behalf of his faithful people.

3dly, Had perfection been by the Levitical priesthood, so that the consciences and hearts of the worshippers had hereby been fully purged from sin; and had the state of the church under the legal dispensation been complete, there could be no need that a new and higher priesthood should afterwards be instituted after the order of Melchisedec, and not after the order of Aaron; and such a change of the priesthood implied a change of the whole ceremonial law, which was inseparably interwoven therewith: both the law and priesthood therefore were to be abolished, in order to introduce another dispensation, more excellent and glorious than the former, even that of the gospel. That such a change of the priesthood is made, is evident,

1. Because our Lord, the priest who should arise after the order of Melchisedec, sprung from the tribe of Judah, not from Levi, and therefore, according to the law, was forbidden to officiate at the altar.

2. The priesthood of Christ was of an entirely different nature from that of the sons of Levi. They were made after the law of a carnal commandment, which settled their succession, and appointed the rites of their consecration; and those who filled the office were dying men; but Christ is made an High-priest of a more excellent kind, after the power of an endless life, acting without either partner or successor, living to discharge his office in the behalf of his faithful people for ever and ever.

3. The efficacy of the gospel priesthood was far superior to that under the law, which was abrogated because of its weakness and unprofitableness, being insufficient to purge the conscience from guilt, or to secure unto the sinner holiness and justification to life, making nothing perfect; and was designed merely to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified and sanctified by faith in him. But Christ has brought in a better hope; his own sacrifice and ever-abiding priesthood give boldness, and access to God, and sure hope of favour and acceptance before him, to every believer.

4. The superior excellence of Christ's priesthood appears in the manner of his consecration: the Levitical priests were made without an oath; but he, with an oath, to denote the immutability, efficacy, and eternity of his sacerdotal character. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament, or covenant, having undertaken completely to answer all the divine requirements on the behalf of his faithful saints, that he might secure to them the accomplishment of all the promised blessings,—a covenant far better than the Mosaic, both in the clearness of the light which accompanies its administration, and the extensiveness of its efficacy, as reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews.

5. The Aaronical high-priests, as mortal men, were many, succeeding each other, as death removed them from their office; but this glorious Person, whom Melchisedec typified, hath an unchangeable priesthood, that never passes from him, because he liveth for ever to discharge his sacerdotal functions; wherefore we may assuredly conclude that Jesus is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them; and therefore they can be in no circumstances of distress or danger, from which he cannot deliver them; while coming to God by him, they receive pardon, grace, and strength.

6. Christ appears transcendently glorious above all other priests, in his moral qualifications. For such an high-priest became us, and no other could have stood us in any stead, but one who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, both in nature and practice, and made higher than the

necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For ° if he were on earth, he should not

be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law :

5 Who serve † unto the example and shadow

* Ch. 7. 11. & 12. 25. & 1. 3. with Lev. i—xvi. 1 Chron. xxiv. † Col. 2. 17. Ch. 9. 9, 23. & 10. 1.

the heavens, in dignity above the angelic hosts, or rather, in purity of nature, excelling them. Who needeth not daily, as those high-priests of the Levitical order, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, on the great day of atonement ; for Christ, having no sin of his own to expiate, needed no sacrifice ; and as to his faithful people's iniquities, his one sacrifice was completely available : for this he did once, when he offered up himself without spot to God, as their infinitely meritorious propitiation. For the law maketh men high-priests which have [sinful] infirmity, and, being sinners as well as others, must offer for themselves as well as the people ; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son High-priest, who is consecrated for evermore, or perfected ; who being in nature sinless and impeccable, never could need a sacrifice for himself ; but, having offered one of eternal efficacy on the behalf of his faithful saints, lives for ever to plead it in the presence of God, that they might reap the unutterably blessed fruits of it to all eternity.

CHAP. VIII.

THE apostle, in what goes before, having shewed that Jesus, as an High-priest is superior to all the Levitical high-priests, inasmuch as, like Melchisedec, he is a king as well as a priest ; nay, an infinitely more righteous king than even Melchisedec, being absolutely free from sin,—he in this and in the following chapter, for the farther illustration of the glory of Jesus as an high-priest, compares his ministrations with the ministrations of the Levitical high-priests, both in respect of the place where he officiates, and in respect of the efficacy of his ministrations.

His discourse on these subjects the apostle begins with observing, that it is a point of infinite importance to mankind as sinners, that we have in Jesus such an High-priest as our sinful state requires, and as he had described, chap. vii. 26. namely, an High-priest absolutely sinless, and infinitely greater than all the angels ; who having offered one effectual sacrifice for sin, even the sacrifice of himself, sat down in his glorified humanity at the right hand of the manifestation of the divine presence in heaven, ver. 1.—as the abiding minister, or High-priest of the true holy places which the Lord hath formed, and not man, ver. 2. This sitting down of the Son of God our High-priest, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, after offering the sacrifice of himself, the apostle had mentioned, chap. i. 3. But it was only as a subject to be afterwards handled. He therefore introduces it in this place in order to a full discussion ; and calls it the sum of all the things that he had hitherto mentioned, because it implied, First, that the sacrifice of himself which Jesus offered, on his entering heaven after his resurrection, was accepted of God the Father as a sufficient atonement for the sins of the world. —Secondly, the sitting of our great priest at the right hand of God implies, that he possesses all power in heaven and on earth. So that he is able to defend his faithful

people from all their enemies, and to reward them at the judgment.—Thirdly, that our High-priest did not, like the Levitical high-priests, depart out of the most holy place after finishing the atonement, but abideth there always as the great minister or High-priest thereof, to open that holy place to the prayers, and other acts of worship performed by his faithful saints on earth, and to their persons after the general judgment ; and to make intercession for the absolute security of their glory, notwithstanding their free agency, for ever and ever.

Of the first of these important matters implied in our High-priest's sitting down at the right hand of God, namely, that he offered the sacrifice of himself, and that that sacrifice was accepted by God the Father as a sufficient atonement for the sins of the world, the apostle treats in this chapter.—Of the second, namely, that he possesseth power as the great Governor and Ruler of all worlds, to save his faithful people, and to give them eternal life, he speaks, chap. ix. 28.—And of the third, that he is the abiding minister of the heavenly holy place, he discourses, chap. x. 19—22.

That Christ has offered an effectual sacrifice for sin, the apostle proves in the following manner: Since every high-priest is constituted to offer both gifts and sacrifices, Messiah, who was constituted by the oath of God the Father an High-priest after the similitude of Melchisedec, must of necessity have had some sacrifice to offer, and (as is necessarily implied) did offer the sacrifice of himself, when he died upon the cross on Calvary, ver. 3.—And that he must have pleaded, and is now pleading, that sacrifice in heaven, is certain ; because if the oath of God had respected his being a priest on earth, he could not have been a priest at all : for the only temple of God on earth where he could offer sacrifice, being occupied by priests who officiated according to the law of Moses, which confined the priest's office to the sons of Aaron, Numb. iii. 10. these priests would have hindered Messiah, who was of the tribe of Judah, from ministering as a priest among them, unless Omnipotence had interfered against a then existing law of his own. It is plain, therefore, that if Messiah was not appointed to exercise his priesthood in heaven, he never acted as a priest at all ; and the oath of God, constituting him a priest, has not taken effect, ver. 4.—Further, to prove that Messiah was to act as an High-priest in heaven, the apostle appealed to the services which the Levitical priests performed according to the law in the inward tabernacle, whose chief use, he tells us, was to be shadows or typical representations of the services to be performed by Christ in heaven. And this affirmation he founds on God's command to Moses, to make all things, not the tabernacles only with their furniture, but the services of the tabernacles also, exactly according to the pattern shewed him on the mount, ver. 5.

Next, with respect to the efficacy of Christ's ministrations as an High-priest, the apostle observes, that they are

of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: ^s for, see, saith he, *that* thou make all

things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 ^h But now hath he obtained a more ex-

^s Exod. 25. 40. & 26. 30. & 27. 28. Numb. 8. 4. Acts, 7. 44. 1 Chron. 28. 19.

^h 2 Cor. 3. 6—11. Gal. 3. 10—29. Ch. 7. 16, 22. & 9. 15.

as much more excellent than the ministrations of the Levitical High-priests, as the covenant or dispensation of religion of which he is the Mediator or High-Priest, by its better promises, excels the covenant or dispensation of the law, ver. 6.—which the apostle proves to be not without fault from this circumstance, that if it had contained all the discoveries and promises which God judged necessary to the justification, sanctification, and salvation of sinners, he would not have introduced a second covenant or dispensation of religion, ver. 7.—Yet that a second covenant or dispensation was to be introduced, is evident from God's own words, Jeremiah, xxxi. 31—34. in which he promised a *new covenant*, ver. 8.—different from that which he made with the Israelites after bringing them out of Egypt, ver. 9.—For in the new covenant, Judah and Israel, typifying all the spiritual Israel, are to have the knowledge of God and of his will set forth, not by dark shadows, as in the old covenant, but in the clearest manner.* And the pardon which the faithful saints are to receive under that covenant, is not a political but an eternal pardon. So that, as was observed, ver. 6. it is a covenant established on better promises than the law, ver. 10, 11, 12.—Lastly, the apostle observes, that by saying a *new covenant*, God has made the covenant of the law *old*, and thereby has insinuated, that, as a thing decayed and useless, it is to be put out of sight altogether, ver. 13.—Thus it appears, that the prophet Jeremiah, in the most express terms, has borne testimony to the superior excellence of the new covenant or dispensation of religion, of which Christ is the *Minister*, *Mediator*, and *High-priest*, and also to God's intention of abrogating the former covenant or dispensation, even the whole body of the law of Moses, with all its ineffectual sacrifices and services.—An argument of this sort, founded on their own scriptures, being so cogent, could not fail to make an impression on the unbelieving Hebrews; and must through divine grace have reconciled such of them to the gospel, as retained any candour or love of truth.

Ver. 2. *A minister of the sanctuary*,] *τῶν ἁγίων*, of *holy things*, which seems preferable. In the next clause the apostle speaks of *the holy places*; and from that clause we are to borrow the word *ἁγιῶν*, and to understand him as Christ's being a minister of the *true holy things*, and of the *true*, that is, the *heavenly sanctuary*. See ver. 5. ch. ix. 1. 11. 24. John, i. 14. ii. 19.

Ver. 3. *For every high-priest is ordained*, &c.] “For the special business of every high-priest, for which he is appointed and authorized of God, is to present oblations and sacrifices of atonement, which were to be slain and offered before he carried their blood into the holy place, and in order to his doing so: it was therefore absolutely necessary that, to answer that character, this great gospel High-priest (*ἱερέων*) of whom we are speaking, should also have a sacrifice to offer, suitable to his dignity as God-Man, and to the glorious state and place of his present ministration; and that he should present

“it in the heavenly sanctuary before the throne of God, as the ancient typical high-priest did the blood of the legal sacrifices before the mercy-seat in the most holy place.”

Ver. 4, 5. *For if he were on earth*,] “But, we may observe by the way, that if he were always to continue on earth, he could not, in any consistence with the Jewish institutions, have been a priest, to officiate at the temple of God in Jerusalem; as there are already a certain order of priests there, who offer the gifts of the people according to the law; and it is exactly settled, that none of any other family should have access to these services; nor would it have been agreeable to the divine purposes that Jesus should by extraordinary dispensation have interfered with their peculiar functions, ver. 5. These he left entirely to those priests who perform divine service to an economy, which contains only the example and shadow of celestial things; as Moses was charged by Jehovah, when he was about to finish the tabernacle; for See, said he, that thou make all things according to the model shewn thee upon the mountain; lest an error which may seem to thee small, should become more material than thou art aware. Now this exactness was required, in special regard to the typical representations couched under these ordinances, the particulars of which Moses himself did not perfectly understand.” The word *ὑποδείγματι*, rendered *example*, ver. 5. is rendered by Dr. Barrow by the very expressive word *subindication*. From an accurate review of this passage, the connection of the apostle's reasoning seems to be this; “We have an High-priest seated on the right hand of God in heaven, who is first a Minister of the true holy things; and, secondly, of the true holy tabernacle. With respect to the first, the *holy things*, it was necessary that he should be a minister of these, because (ver. 3.) every high-priest is constituted for the very purpose of offering these holy things,—gifts and sacrifices. And in the next place, with respect to his being a minister of the *true tabernacle*, namely, that in heaven; this also is equally necessary, because, ver. 4. if he were on earth, he could not be a priest officiating in the earthly sanctuary, as not being of the order and family of Aaron.”

Ver. 6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry*,] This now seems to depend on ver. 1. Now that he is set on the right hand of the throne, &c. The *more excellent ministry* is that which is more excellent than that of the high-priests under the law, who performed divine service to the exemplifying and shadowing forth the heavenly things, or great realities performed by Christ. The *peculiar* covenant of Moses was a covenant which contained the promises of a long life and plenty in the land of Canaan: the covenant made by Christ, or brought from God, and offered to the world by him, was a covenant by which God engaged himself to grant immortal life in heaven to all who obeyed the conditions of it. Now as the engagement

cellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better * covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 ¹ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For, finding fault with them, he saith, ² Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah :

9 ¹ Not according to the covenant ^m that

I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; ² because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will [†] ^o put my laws into their mind, and write them [‡] in their hearts: and ^p I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people :

* Or *testament*. ¹ Ch. 7. 11—18. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 3. 21. ² Jer. 31. 31—34. & 33. 14. & 32. 40. Ezek. 37. 26. Il. 55. 3, 7. Ch. 10. 16. Acts, 3. 26. & 13. 46. ¹ John, 2. 7, 8. ² John, 1. 17. ² Cor. 3. 6—11. ^m Exod. xii—xiv. xix. Deut. 1. 31. Hosea, 11. 1, 3. Deut. 5. 2, 3. & 24. 1. ⁿ Jer. 11. 7, 8. & 22. 9. Deut. 29. 25. & 32. 15. Judges, 2. 11. 2 Kings, 17. 15—20. Neh. 9. 26, 27. Pl. 78. 10, 57. [†] Gr. *give*. ^o Deut. 30. 6. ^p Jer. 31. 33. & 32. 40. Ezek. 11. 19, 20. & 36. 26, 27. 2 Cor. 3. 3. & 5. 27. Pl. 40. 8. James, 1. 18, 21. 1 Pet. 1. 23. [‡] Or *upon*. ^p Exod. 19. 5, 6. Pl. 50. 7. & 81. 8, 10. Jer. 24. 7. & 30. 22. & 32. 38, 40. Ezek. 11. 20. & 37. 27. & 36. 28. Hosea, 1. 10. & 2. 23. Zech. 8. 8. & 13. 9.

ment of a grant of immortal life is better than the engagement for a present life only, so the covenant which offers better terms must be a better covenant; and the Mediator of the better *covenant* is most to be preferred. See ch. vii. 16. The new covenant was established upon so much better promises, as the promise of eternal life, with perfect felicity in heaven, is better than that of long life with temporal felicity on earth. The will of God promulged to mankind, with a promise or sanction of eternal life to be bestowed on all that would observe it, is properly a law: when therefore these promises are thus annexed to the covenant of Christ, they are justly said to be established by law. See ch. ix. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Ver. 7.] Mr. Peirce is of opinion, that what follows, to the end of this chapter, is a digression, or an argument brought in by the apostle incidentally, upon his having said that Christ had obtained a more excellent ministry than the priests under the law. It was a natural inference, that if his ministry was more excellent than theirs, the covenant of which he was Mediator was more excellent than that under which they ministered. But the thing being of great importance to his subject, he does not content himself with the bare mention of the inference, but expatiates in the distinct proof and confirmation of it; shewing that God, during that covenant, spoke of it as very defective, and of another more perfect which was to succeed it.

For if that first *covenant* had been faultless,] “ For if the former *Sinai* covenant had been free from all defects, as to its establishment, light, grace, and efficacy for perfecting the state of the church, which indeed it never was designed for, however good it was in itself, and however fit to answer its particular ends, to which undoubtedly it was well suited, as God himself was the author of it: if, I say, it had not been insufficient to answer all the ends of his grace towards his faithful people in their church-state upon earth, then there certainly would have been no occasion for the wisdom of God to have contrived, nor for his people to have desired, another more spiritual and complete administration of the covenant of grace upon earth; nor would there have been any room for introducing it under the

“ gospel state, as it was plain there was.” Instead of *had been faultless*, Dr. Heylin reads, *had been imperfect*.

Ver. 8. For finding fault with them, &c.] “ For God having accused and reproved the Jews by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. xxxi. 31, &c. for their transgressions of that covenant, (he says,) Observe with attention, wonder, and joy, The days are coming and hastening on apace, (says the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth,) even the days of the Messiah, whom you expect to come, when I will assuredly set up a new covenant-dispensation; and I will establish it with my faithful people, who yield to be saved by grace, and perseveringly cleave to me in faith, both with those who are among the ten tribes of Israel, and with those of the house of Judah, including that of Benjamin, who in all their turns have shamefully violated my present covenant with them: and I will make it not with those only who belong to any of these tribes, but with all my spiritual Israel who were typified by them; and who under the gospel state, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, shall be called the *Israel of God*. Gal. vi. 16.” That the true *Israel of God*, of what nation soever, are to be included under these characters or descriptions of *Israel* and *Judah*, appears; because the persons here intended, are those who through grace would receive the laws of Jehovah into their mind and hearts; which cannot be said of the whole body of Israel after the flesh, much less of every one of them, but holds good of all the *spiritual Israel*, whether Jews or Gentiles, and of none but them.

Ver. 10. For this is the covenant, &c.] “ This new covenant shall be of a much better tenor than that: for this is the sum and substance of the covenant which I will make with all my spiritual Israel who perseveringly yield to my free grace, under the gospel state, says the great Jehovah; I will enlighten and renew their understandings, that they may behold the spirituality, purity, and extent of the moral law, by an inward operation upon their minds; and will give them a plain insight into the doctrine of salvation by the Messiah: and I will not only set these things with the clearest and strongest evidence before their minds; but will further

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, ' Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their ini-

quities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

¹ Jer. 31. 34. If. 54. 13. Ezek. 28. 26. & 34. 30. & 39. 28. John, 6. 45. 1 Cor. 2. 10. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. & 5. 20. & 2. 13, 14. Joel, 2. 28. John, 7. 39. ² Jer. 31. 34. & 33. 8. & 50. 20. If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. Micah, 7. 18, 19. Acts, 10. 43. & 13. 39. Rom. 11. 27. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 24. Ch. 10. 16, 17. Rev. 1. 5. 1 John, 1. 3, 7, 9. & 2. 1, 2. ³ Ch. 7. 11, 22, 28, 19. & 9. 9, 10.

“ more make a thorough change upon their wills, affections, and all the practical powers of their souls, by engraving my law and gospel, not (as I did the law of the ten commandments) by a miraculous impression upon tables of stone, but by a supernatural gracious operation of my Spirit, who shall write them in the *fleshy tables of their hearts* (2 Cor. iii. 3.) to guide and govern them in all their ways. And, according to this new and better covenant, I will be to them an all-sufficient God, in a way of protection, favour, and blessing; and will own them, and perform all things for them as their God: and they, if they perseveringly cleave to me, shall be inclined and enabled, by my grace, to answer their obligations to me, in faith and love, duty and obedience, owning me in a becoming profession of my name as my people.”

Ver. 11. *And they shall not teach every man*] We are not to suppose that these words are designed to exclude all public and private, ministerial, family, and social instruction: for this is enforced in the New Testament institution of a gospel ministry, to continue to the consummation of all things (Matth. xxviii. 20. Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13.); and in the obligation which it has laid upon Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. vi. 4.); as also in the directions which are given in this very epistle (ch. iii. 13. and x. 24, 25.) to private Christians, to exhort one another daily, &c. This passage therefore must be taken, either in a comparative sense, as such expressions often are (see If. xliiii. 18. Jer. xxiii. 18. Matth. ix. 13.); or else with reference to that manner of teaching which was used and rested in under the obscurities of the Old Testament dispensation, and the corrupt interpretations of the Jewish doctors; or both may be included.

Ver. 13. *He hath made the first old.*] St. Paul in another place calls the Jewish ceremonial law *weak and beggarly elements*; and, ch. vii. 18. of this epistle, he says, *There is a disannulling of that commandment for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.* Agreeably to this, he here speaks of it as *waxing old*, in which case things become weak and useless, and so are ready to be laid aside, or put out of sight. So it is with an old garment, as he uses that similitude, ch. i. 11. or, with men worn out with old age, who are just dropping into the grave. Whichever allusion the apostle might intend, they seem to be in the right, who think that the apostle here refers to the speedy destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, whereby an end was put to the services prescribed by the law of Moses.

Inferences.—How glorious is the Lord Jesus Christ in his present ministration, as our great High-priest! He continues to exercise this office, in the tabernacle of his miraculously formed human body, at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly sanctuary; and there presents the merit of his atoning sacrifice in his intercession. How necessary for us, as well as honourable to him, was his entering into the holiest of all, to fulfil that important part of his office! This could not have been finished by his continuing on earth; because there were *Aaronical* priests, which order he was not of, but infinitely superior to; and none but those of that order could legally officiate in the earthly sanctuary; and heaven itself was the only proper place for him to appear in for this purpose. And how much more excellent is his sacrifice, than all the offerings of former high-priests, as to its dignity, and the sanctuary in which it is presented to God! They were mere shadows of what is done by Christ; but the perfection and glory of all is accomplished in him, as the Mediator of the new covenant.—How close should we keep to divine revelation in every thing that pertains to the service of God! As *Moses* was to make all things, relating to the tabernacle, exactly according to the pattern which God had shewn him in the mount; so all our worship is to be according to *institution*, without any addition, alteration, or abatement.—How much better is the gospel dispensation of the covenant of grace, than that which was made with *Israel* at mount *Sinai*! It has a better Mediator, and stands on the foot of better promises. It contains rich and free, clear and express promises of a spiritual relation to God, as the God of his faithful people, to be their portion, and to engage their love and duty to him; and promises of mercy to forgive all their iniquities, and not to remember any of their sins against them; and to lead them into a plain and saving acquaintance with himself in Christ, and to write his law and gospel in their hearts. O the happiness of those who are in covenant with God! O blessed tenor of this pure unmixed dispensation of the new covenant! It shall never wax old or vanish away, like the *Sinai* covenant; but shall abide in full force, virtue, and vigour, as the last and most perfect administration of grace in this world; and shall remain, till it issue in the everlasting happiness of all the faithful saints of God in the world to come.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have in this chapter a summary of the foregoing observations: *Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such an High-priest, so great*

ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* ° the golden pot that had [¶] manna, and [§] Aaron's rod that budded, and ^{||} the tables of the covenant ;

° Exod. 16. 34. John, 6. 32—57.

¶ Numb. 17. 10. Ps. 110. 2, 3.

§ Deut. 10. 2, 5. || 1 Kings, 8, 9. || 2 Chron. 5. 10.

them freely and fully. Now *in that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old*, abolishing the Mosaic dispensation, because of its weakness and unprofitableness. *Now that which decayeth and waxeth old*, as is the case with the Jewish economy at present, like a person dying with age, *is ready to vanish away*, the time being at hand, when, by the destruction of the temple, the whole service must cease, never to be resumed again. *Note* ; The dispensation of the covenant of grace, under which we live, should be matter of our unspeakable comfort and unceasing thankfulness, wherein all the riches of God's grace, without a veil, are laid open before his believing people.

CHAP. IX.

TO shew that the Sinaitic covenant was justly laid aside, the apostle judged it necessary to enter into a particular examination of the religious services which it enjoined, and to prove that these were designed, not for cleansing the conscience of the worshippers, but to prefigure the services and blessings of the new or gospel covenant : so that the latter being come, there was no longer occasion for continuing the former, to prefigure them. This chapter, therefore, is an illustration of chap. viii. 5. where the apostle affirms, that the priests worshipped God in the tabernacle, *with the representation and shadow of the heavenly services*. And it was proper to explain this matter copiously, because it must have had a great influence, in weaning the Hebrews from the Levitical services, and in reconciling them to the abrogation of a form of worship, which, though of divine appointment, was now become useless, having accomplished its end.

The apostle begins with acknowledging that the covenant made at Sinai, of which the Levitical priests were the ministers, had ordinances of worship appointed by God himself, and a sanctuary made of such materials as this world of ours could furnish out, and the centre of a ritual which contained many institutions comparatively low and carnal, ver. 1—7. Such was the ritual of Moses ; the Holy Spirit, by whom it was prescribed, signifying by the difficulty of entrance into the holy or holies, and the necessity of the incense-cloud, and the atoning blood, that the way into the holiest place, that is, into God's immediate presence, was not yet comparatively made manifest, while the first tabernacle had its continuance, or, in other words, while the Jewish economy lasted, ver. 8. which, far from being the grand and ultimate scheme, is only a kind of allegorical figure and parable, referring to the glorious displays of the present time ; in which, nevertheless, there is hitherto a continuance of the temple service ; so that gifts and sacrifices are still offered, which amount not to the real expiation of guilt, but to the averting of some temporal evils which the law denounced on transgressors, ver. 9. For the Mosaic dispensation reached not to the sublimest means of preparing the soul for another life, but consisted in a variety of ordinances relating to the purifica-

tion of the flesh, which were to continue in force only till the time of reformation, when things should be put into a better situation by the appearance of the Messiah himself in his church, ver. 10.—Thus, by the inefficacy of the services performed in the Jewish tabernacles, the Holy Ghost has taught us, that all the rites of atonement, and all the acts of worship which men perform on earth, have no efficacy in the way of merit, to procure for them the pardon of sin, and admission into the presence of God.

Next, in opposition to the ineffectual services performed by the Levitical priests in the holy places on earth, the apostle sets the things which they prefigured ; namely, the effectual services performed by Christ in the holy places in heaven.—These services he describes as follows : Christ being come into the world, as the High-priest appointed by the oath of God the Father, to procure for us the blessings of pardon and salvation which are to be bestowed through his ministration in the greater tabernacle, ver. 11.—hath entered into the holy place of that great tabernacle, even into heaven itself, neither by the blood of goats nor of calves, but by his own blood or death ; and through the merit of that great sacrifice he hath obtained for every faithful faint an everlasting remission of sin, ver. 12.—Now, that the shedding of Christ's blood should have this efficacy, is most reasonable. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, did, by the appointment of God, redeem the bodies of the offending Israelites from temporal death, and cleanse them in such a manner as to fit them for the tabernacle-worship, ver. 13.—how much more reasonable is it, that the shedding of the blood of Christ, who in the whole of his obedience was faultless, and is over all God blessed for ever, (Rom. ix. 5.), should have merit sufficient to cleanse the conscience of penitent sinners, from the guilt of works which deserve death, and fit them, if faithful, for worshipping God in heaven ? ver. 14.—This passage being a description of Christ's ministry as an High-priest, in the true habitation of God, it may be considered as an illustration of ch. viii. 2. where Christ is called *a minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man*.

The apostle had affirmed, ch. viii. 6. that Jesus is the Mediator or High-priest of a better covenant or dispensation than the law : but the proof of his assertion he deferred to this place, where it naturally comes in. For, having shewed that the death of Christ has sufficient merit to procure for penitent sinners the pardon of sin, he subjoins ; for this reason, that his death is so infinitely meritorious, he is appointed by God the Father the Mediator of the new covenant, that by dying to procure the pardon of sin, persevering believers of all ages and nations, the called seed of Abraham, may obtain the eternal inheritance, ver. 15.—Accordingly, to shew that the new covenant, in which pardon is promised to penitent sinners, is procured by the death of Christ, the apostle observes, that in every case where

5 And over it the ^b cherubims of glory not now speak particularly.
 shadowing the ¹ mercy seat; of which we can- 6 Now when these things were thus or-

^b Exod. 25. 18, 22. 1 Kings, 8. 6, 7. & 37. 7. Lev. 16. 2. 1 Sam. 4. 4. Pl. 80. 1. & 99. 1. John, 1. 51. 1 Pet. 1. 12. Eph. 3. 10. ¹ Exod. 31. 7. & 26. 34. Lev. 16. 2, 14. Rom. 3. 24, 25. 1 John, 2. 1, 2. Ch. 4. 16.

where God entered into a covenant with men, he made the death of an appointed sacrifice necessary to its ratification; to teach sinners, that all his intercourses with them, are founded on the sacrifice of his Son, ver. 16.—The death of Christ therefore became absolutely necessary according to the previous appointment of God the Father, for the stability of the covenant between God and offending man, as well as for the satisfaction of the justice of God: (however, there is this infinite difference between the God of unerring truth and frail mortals, that his promise implies the absolute certainty of the fulfilment of it on the conditions stated in the covenant; in which sense Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.) Hence we may observe, that not even the covenant at Sinai was made without blood, ver. 17—20. and hence, likewise, the tabernacles, when set up, and all the vessels of the ministry, were at first consecrated for the worship of God, by sprinkling them with the blood of the sacrifices, ver. 21.—and ever after that, all these things were, by appointment of the law, annually cleansed with the blood of the sacrifices offered on the day of expiation. In short, without the shedding of blood, the law allowed no remission on the day of the annual atonement, ver. 22.—Wherefore, seeing God determined not to pardon sinners, nor to open heaven to them without the shedding of the blood of his Son, it was necessary for shewing this, that the Mosaic tabernacles, which are the figures of the holy places in the heavens, should be cleansed or opened to the worshippers, by the sacrifices of bulls and goats as emblems of the sacrifice of Christ: but heaven itself was to be cleansed, or opened to believers, by the actual offering of that sacrifice, of which the others were the types, ver. 23.—And, this was the reason that Christ our great High-priest did not enter into the Jewish tabernacles, but into heaven itself, not with the blood of goats and of calves, but with his own blood, now to appear continually, as our High-priest, before the face of God; and by so doing to make continual intercession in behalf of his faithful people, ver. 24.—To this purpose, however, it was not necessary, that Christ should offer himself often, as the Jewish High priest every year made atonement for the sins of the people, by entering into the earthly holy places, with the blood of the appointed sacrifices, ver. 25.—For, in that case, Christ must have suffered often since the foundation of the world. But now, at the conclusion of the Mosaic dispensation, he hath appeared on earth to put an end to the typical sin offerings of the law, by the one sacrifice of himself, ver. 26.—And, to the obtaining of our pardon, his dying once was sufficient. For, since God hath appointed men to die but once, as the punishment of the sin of the first man, and after death to be judged but once for their own sins, ver. 27.—so Christ being once offered for sin, that one offering is held by God the Father as a sufficient expiation; and by virtue of that one sacrifice, he will, to them who wait for him, appear a second time, without offering any more

sacrifice for sin; and he will thus appear, to acquit and save his faithful people by his own sentence as Judge, ver. 28.

Ver. 2. *For there was a tabernacle, &c.*] Concerning the tabernacle and its furniture we refer to the notes on that subject in Exodus.

Ver. 3. *The holiest of all;*] Or, *The holy of holies.*

Ver. 4. *Which had the golden censer,*] Some have started a difficulty here; “Whence is it that the holy of holies is said to have this golden censer, as part of the things deposited in it, whereas Moses mentions only the ark, the pot of manna, Aaron’s rod, the two tables of the law, laid up in or near the ark, the propitiatory, or cover of the ark, and the cherubims?” This difficulty has been increased, in their judgment, from the observation that is made 1 Kings, viii. 9. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there in Horeb:* compare 2 Chron. v. 10. But let it be observed, that the apostle is speaking of what was put into the holy of holies by Moses, and not of what was placed there by Solomon in after times: nor is it any objection to what the apostle says, that all those things which Moses put there, were not replaced when Solomon built his temple. His professed design is, to speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness, not of the temple in Jerusalem; and therefore he is concerned only with the furniture of the holy of holies, as it was in the days of Moses. Now it is true, that in the books of Moses, no mention is made of this golden censer, as deposited within the veil, and thence to be taken out on the great day of expiation; yet, supposing it to be put within the veil, within easy reach, so that the priest could take it, without going within the veil to get at it,—this would answer all that the apostle says. It is certain that the high-priest was not allowed to enter into the holy of holies but with a censer, or dish of burning coals from off the altar before the Lord; and he was obliged to put incense upon the fire, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy seat, that he die not. Lev. xvi. 12, 13. He could not therefore enter into the holy of holies without incensing it; and he must have had this golden censer to put the incense on. It lay, therefore, most probably, behind the curtain, and within the high-priest’s reach, without his entering the place to get at it. Now this golden censer, and the other things enumerated were all *κτῆνη, utensils, or furniture,* suited to the customs and practices of this world. It matters little to inquire, whether all these things were laid up in the ark, or whether they were put in proper places near the ark,—as the Greek which we render *wherein,* will well express;—*by which, or near which, or where;*—that is, in the tabernacle. They made up the furniture of the holy of holies, and they were all made of gold, and stone, and wood; just as the goods of this world are;—and this is what the apostle was to shew. See Numb. xvii. 10.

Ver. 5. *And over it the cherubims*] That these things were shadows, emblems, and patterns of heavenly things,

dained, the priests went ^k always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone ^l once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people :

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, ^m that the way into the holiest of all was not yet

made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing :

9 ⁿ Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience ;

10 Which stood ^o only in meats and drinks,

^k Numb. 28. 3. Dan. 8. 11, 12. ^l Exod. 30. 18. Lev. 16. 2, 15, 34. Ch. 5. 3. & 7. 27. & 10. 19, 20. Ver. 24, 25. ^m John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. Eph. 2. 18. Ch. 4. 16. & 10. 10—27. ⁿ Col. 2. 17. Ch. 7. 11, 13, 19. & 10. 1, 11. & 11. 16. Acts, 13. 39. & 15. 10. Gal. 3. 21. ^o Lev. i—ix. xi. xvi. Numb. xv. xix. xxviii. xxix. Ch. 7. 11, 16. Col. 2. 10, 20. Rom. 14. 17.

is past a doubt, from what we meet with in this epistle ; nor does it appear difficult to understand of what the mercy-seat was an emblem, since St. Paul expressly speaks of Christ under that notion, Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory or mercy-seat.* The cherubims must have over-shadowed this mercy-seat, or covered it, since their wings joined together over the middle of it. These cherubims are commonly, and I think with good reason, thought to be sensible representations of angels ; and they are called *cherubims of glory*, not barely upon account of the matter or formation of them, but as they were emblems of that *Shechinah*, or glorious presence of God, which certainly attended the ark, and the mercy-seat in the tabernacle. See the passages in the margin, and on Ezekiel, ch. i. The next clause has been thought by some to refer to the cherubim only ; but Dr. Heylin seems to have given the just interpretation of it ; *Concerning all which things we are not at this time to give a more distinct account ;* ἐκ τούτων :—
“ There is no need for us to speak distinctly respecting
“ each of them, either on account of the argument which
“ we are upon ; or for your information, who are Hebrews, and well acquainted with them.”

Ver. 6. *Now when, &c.* The common priests went every day into the outward tabernacle, to light the lamps, to burn the incense, or to put, at the appointed times, the shew-bread upon the table : the doing these, and such like acts, is called *accomplishing the service of God*. The lamps were to be lighted every evening, and the priest was to burn incense every morning and evening : see Exod. xxx. 7, 8.

Ver. 7. *But into the second, &c.* ἁγνοματιῶν, rendered *errors*, signifies, *sins of error, or ignorance*. Respecting the day of expiation, see Lev. xvi.

Ver. 8. *The Holy Ghost this signifying, &c.* “ *The Holy Ghost manifesting, δεικνύσας, plainly shewing this* : not intimating, but clearly pointing it out,—*that the way of the holies (or into the holy of holies,) was not open to all, while the first tabernacle stood.*” By the *first tabernacle*, the apostle does not mean that part of the tabernacle which he called the *first tabernacle* in the second verse ; but he means the tabernacle as it was first ordered in the wilderness, long before Solomon built the temple. The Holy Ghost plainly manifested, that the way into the holy of holies was not free or open to all : there was not permission to all to enter into it ; since none but the high-priest alone, and he but once a year, was allowed to enter into it. The apostle had observed, that the holy of holies, in the taber-

nacle, like the outward part of it, was all κοσμικόν, *worldly* ; that is, furnished only with such things as were suited to this world, and not to make the worshippers perfect as to conscience. The Holy Ghost plainly shewed, that a true internal worship, such as would render every particular person happy for ever, was not the design of the ceremonial law, any farther than that law had reference to the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ. But in this latter respect it pointed entirely to heavenly things ; and therefore the opinion of those who hold that the Mosaic economy, in all its different views, has no respect to a future state, is greatly to be reprobated. The words, *the Holy Ghost this signifying*, seem to me not to refer to the present verse only, but to the whole which follows, as the spiritual explication of the legal ceremonies referred to in the preceding part of the chapter.

Ver. 9. *Which was a figure for the time then present,* The word *then* is not in the original, though our translators have not distinguished it, as usual in such cases, by putting it in a different character. By the *present time* many eminent commentators understand the present time of the temple service : “ What the Holy Ghost pointed out from the construction of the tabernacle, and only the high-priest’s entrance into it, holds equally now under the temple at this present time ; in which gifts and sacrifices are offered daily.” Doddridge, however, and others, give the passage a different turn ; understanding it, not as referring merely to the temple, but that the constitution before described, was a figurative representation of the *Christian dispensation*, which, at the time when the apostle wrote, was displayed in all its glory : in which view, we read and translate as follows ;—“ *Which is only a kind of allegorical figure and parable, referring to the glorious displays of the present time ; in which, nevertheless, there is hitherto a continuance of the temple service ; so that gifts and sacrifices are still offered, which yet, in the nature of things, are not able to make the person who performs the service perfect, with respect to the conscience ; as they refer not to the real expiation of guilt, but only to the averting of some temporal evils, which the law denounced on transgressions.*” This, in a few words, expresses what seems to be of the greatest importance for understanding the Mosaic sacrifices ; which is, that they were never intended to expiate offences to such a degree, as to deliver the sinner from the final judgment of God, in another world ; but merely to make his peace with the government under which he then was, and to furnish him with a pardon pleadable

and divers washings, and carnal * ordinances, imposed on them until ^o the time of reformation.

11 But Christ ^o being come an high priest of good things to come, by ^r a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but ^r by his own blood; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal

redemption for us.

13 ^r For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;

14 How much more shall the ^o blood of Christ, who ^x through the eternal Spirit ^y offered himself ^z without [†] spot to God, ^a purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

* Or rites, or ceremonies. ^p Gal. 4. 4. Ch. 2. 5. & 6. 5. Eph. 1. 10. ^q Gal. 4. 4. John, 1. 14. Ch. 2. 17. & 3. 3. & 3. 7. & 4. 14, 15. & 5. 6, 10. & 6. 20. & 8. 1. & 7. 15, 17, 22—28. Ver. 12—15. 26, 28. & 10. 5—22. Titus, 2. 14. Eph. 5. 2. ^r Ch. 8. 2. Mat. 1. 20. Luke, 1. 35. John, 1. 14. Jer. 21. 22. If. 4. 2. ^s Acts, 20. 28. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. Titus, 2. 14. ^t Peter, 1. 19. Rev. 1. 5. & 5. 9. Ch. 10. 9, 10, 12, 14. & 1. 3. ^u Lev. i—xvii. Numb. xix. Ch. 10. 4. ^v See ver. 12. Acts, 20. 28. ^w Peter, 1. 19. ^x John, 1. 7. & 2. a. ^y Rom. 1. 4. ^z 1 Peter, 3. 18. If. 42. 1. John, 3. 31. [†] If. liii. 1. Dan. 9. 24. Mat. 20. 28. Rom. 3. 25. & 4. 25. & 5. 6—10. & 6. 10. & 8. 3, 34. Gal. 1. 4. Eph. 5. 2. ^a 1 Thess. 5. 10. Titus, 2. 14. ^b 1 Peter, 2. 24. & 3. 18. & 1. 19, 20. ^c Lev. 22. 20. Numb. 19. 2, 11. Deut. 15. 21. & 17. 1. If. 53. 9. Dan. 9. 24, 26. 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^d 1 Peter, 1. 19. & 2. 22. ^e Or fault. ^f Rev. 1. 5. ^g 1 John, 1. 7. Ch. 13. 12. & 10. 22. & 6. 1. Luke, 1. 74, 75. ^h 1 Peter, 4. 2.

pleadable against any prosecution which might be commenced against him in their courts of justice, or any exclusion from the privilege of drawing near to God, as one externally at peace with him, in the solemnities of his temple worship. Expositors have perplexed themselves greatly with respect to the construction of this and the next verse; which however appears to me exceeding plain. The apostle's reasoning seems to be this: "By what we have mentioned in the foregoing verses, the Holy Ghost plainly denoted what follows, ver. 8. namely, that the way into the holy of holies was not made manifest while the first tabernacle continued; which is a figure, a visible type and emblem even to the present time: at which time the same kind of gifts and sacrifices are offered in the temple, as were heretofore offered in the tabernacle: and which neither then nor now are able to make perfect, as to the conscience, him that ministereth only in meats or drinks;—τὸν λατρεύοντα μόνον ἐπὶ ἐσώματι." This is a natural and easy construction of the words, and the 9th and 10th verses must otherwise appear as tautology, the apostle having before said the same thing; unless we understand him as here speaking of the temple service, which it seems extremely proper for his argument to assert as of the same import and signification with the tabernacle service. *Until the time of reformation,* means the time of the Messiah, when all things should be set aright. See Acts, iii. 19. and ch. xi. 19.

Ver. 11. *But Christ being come, &c.]* The apostle here begins to set forth the superiority of our High-priest, by shewing that, in respect to his priestly office, he has no concern with mundane, secular, worldly matters, but is wholly engaged with future good things for his people. Christ did not pass into the holy of holies, as the Jewish high-priest, nor indeed did he pass through any tabernacle made with hands; but he went into a greater and more perfect tabernacle,—even into heaven itself. The high-priest was wont to pass through the outward part of the temple, in order to get into the holy of holies. Christ went into the true holy of holies through a more excellent and perfect tabernacle, and therefore not of this building. He did not use a golden censer, or any worldly instruments; nor did

he enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of [δία,] his own blood; and he entered once for all into the true holy of holies: nor was this done to obtain an annual remission of sins, but an eternal redemption for all his faithful people: nor has he occasion often to repeat or renew what he has done; but, once for all, he has accomplished for ever all that he aimed at in his great work of atonement.

Ver. 12. *Neither by the blood of goats, &c.]* This and the preceding verse may be connected and paraphrased as follows: "But Christ an High-priest of good things to be afterwards bestowed, being come, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, which was not, as the Jewish tabernacle, made with hands, or fashioned by men; being come (I say,) to the holy of holies, he entered once thereinto, not indeed with the blood of goats and calves, as the high-priests did,—having attained eternal redemption for all his faithful people,—a redemption, of which all the remissions and all the benefits procured by the ministrations of the Aaronical priesthood, were but very imperfect figures."

Ver. 13, 14. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats,]* The legal impurities debarred the Jews from an attendance upon the public service; but they were freed from these by the sacrifices, washings, and sprinklings appointed by the Mosaic law, which are called carnal ordinances, ver. 10. and so became qualified again for the public worship; and of this the apostle speaks under the notion of sanctification, as typical of that internal sanctification which he speaks of in ver. 14. That this sanctification or purifying is to be considered with respect to the divine service, appears from the 14th verse, which is in immediate connection with the 13th, and wherein he represents the advantage that we have by the blood of Christ; namely, to be qualified and privileged to serve the living God. Many understand the words *eternal Spirit*, of the *Logos*, or Divine nature of our Lord; and this seems indeed most agreeable to the nature of the apostle's argument, since he is setting forth the intrinsic worth and excellence of his offering; though it must be owned, that a good sense may be given of the words, when they are interpreted of the Holy Spirit. Bishop

15 ^b And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption ^c of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, ^d they which

are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity ^e be the death of the testator.

^b 1 Tim. 2. 5. Ch. 7. 22. & 2. 10. & 8. 6. & 12. 24. Ps. 40. 6—8. Jf. 53. 4—10. Rom. 7. 4. & 8. 2—4. & 34. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 19. & 3. 18. & 2. 24. Rev. 5. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^c Acts, 13. 39. Rom. 3. 25. 1 John, 2. 2. & 1. 7. & 3. 8. & 4. 10. ^d Rom. 8. 30. & 4. 23, 16. & 9. 23, 24. 2 Cor. 5. 1, 21. Gal. 3. 13, 14. Eph. 1. 7, 13, 14. 1 Thess. 5. 9, 10. 1 Peter, 1. 2—4. Rom. 8. 17, 18. ^e Or *be brought in*.

Fell so understands them, and particularly mentions Christ's being conceived, proclaimed, anointed, for working miracles, and at last voluntarily laying down and taking up his life *by the Spirit*; and in this view many receive the present text as a full testimony to the eternity, and consequently the divinity, of the Holy Spirit. Christ is here said to have *offered himself*: he was to go through life and death too; he was to do his Father's will upon earth during his most sacred ministry; and when he had done all this, he was to offer up himself free from spot or fault in every respect. If his blood only had been mentioned, it would signify no more than his dying, as was determined of him; but the offering himself implies the whole of his life and death too, in all his undertakings for man, from his infinite condescension in becoming incarnate, to his ascension to heaven. *Dead works* evidently mean all *sins*, and, in the full sense of the phrase, all works which do not proceed from the fear and love of God, all of which have in them the nature of sin. The *blood of Christ* is said to *purge or purify* from these, as it makes atonement for, or obtains the forgiveness of them; the consequence of which is, that the conscience is hereby freed from the distressing sense of guilt, and a person acquires a freedom in the service of God. But this purification of the conscience necessarily includes the sanctification of the heart: for "the Blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth from all sin," 1 John, i. 7. not only from the guilt, but from the power, and, in the faithful soul, from the indwelling of sin. The merit of that blood derives into the souls of the faithful all the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit of God, that are necessary to prepare and mature them for eternal glory.

Ver. 15.] What follows in this chapter seems to be in a good measure a digression, though a most pertinent and useful one. Having, in what goes before, by comparing the ancient tabernacles and the service thereof with Christ, shewn the weakness of it, he returns to this topic in the beginning of the next chapter; but here, upon having asserted the great virtue of the blood of Christ, he enlarged, in order to shew how necessary the shedding of his blood was, partly upon the account of his office as Mediator, and partly from the nature of God's covenant with men, as appears by what was done under the first covenant. He argues, from the different natures of the things to be purified with sacrifices, that the blood of a more excellent sacrifice was necessary under the second, than under the first; and in the four last verses he has a respect to what he had before said, of Christ dying, and entering into the holy of holies but once; proving this to have been every way sufficient.

And for this cause] And by that [blood] he is the Mediator of the new covenant, that death being provided for the redemp-

tion, &c. Chapman, Euseb. vol. ii. p. 338. This reading seems unexceptionably just. Dr. Sykes understands it in the same manner, and thus paraphrases the verse: "And besides, through this blood Christ is become the Mediator of the new covenant, and acts as such between God and man; so that as death intervened under the first covenant, in order to ratify that, and to secure the engagement to deliver from or pardon the transgressions which were under it; in like manner, under the second covenant, there was to be an intervention of death, &c." The word Διαθήκη has throughout this epistle been hitherto truly rendered *covenant*, and so it should have been here. The Hebrew word ברית *berith*, invariably signifies a *covenant*, and the apostle plainly had this in his eye. See ver. 18—20. Besides, a *testament* has no Mediator belonging to it, as a *covenant* has; and therefore "the Mediator of a testament" is an improper, perhaps an unintelligible expression. See the next verse. The apostle in the present verse gives this reason why Christ was the Mediator of a new covenant through his blood; namely, because as by the intervention of death assurance was made or given that transgressions under the first covenant should be pardoned; so likewise under the second covenant, by means of death, the faithful should have assurance that their sins should be remitted, and they entitled to an everlasting inheritance. There is a general likeness or similitude in the two great scenes of God's providence and grace. There was death in the first covenant, in order to the establishing of that law which gave the Israelites assurance that their sins of ignorance should be forgiven; and that they should, if they would conform to what was commanded, enjoy a present temporal possession. There was likewise death in the second covenant, to establish that; and to give assurance that those with whom it was made, that is, all the faithful of all nations, ages, and dispensations, should enjoy a future and eternal inheritance. It was expedient that Christ should be made man, or be partaker of flesh and blood, that *through death he might destroy him that had the power of death*. Ch. ii. 14. The God-man Christ therefore was Mediator through his blood, that as death intervened for the freeing men from transgressions, and giving them a present enjoyment in the land of Canaan, under the first covenant; in like manner, under the second covenant, they who should enjoy an everlasting inheritance, might, by the intervening of death, receive the pardon of their sins, and life everlasting.

Ver. 16. For where a testament is, &c.] "For where a covenant is engaged in, answerable to that which typified this of which I now speak,—to make it firm and binding, there must be necessarily something done which implies the death of the covenanting party." Nothing can be more foreign to the apostle's subject than to speak of

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon, neither the first testament was * dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats,

with water, and † scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20 Saying, ^h This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

^c Gal. 3. 15. ^f Exod. 12. 22. & 24. 5-8. Lev. i-xvi. Numb. xxviii. xxix. ^{*} Or purified. ^g Exod. 24. 5, 6. Lev. 14. 4, 49. & 16. 14, 15, 18. [†] Or purple. ^h Exod. 24. 8. Zech. 9. 11. Mat. 26. 28. Ch. 13. 20. ⁱ Exod. 29. 12, 36. Lev. 8. 15. & 16. 14, 16.

of testaments and testators, as he is made to do in this and the next verse, and then to return again, ver. 18. to the subject of *covenants*, upon which he had been treating. But let us consider what was the fact, that we may understand, or at least get some light into, this very difficult portion of scripture. A covenant is proposed by God the Father to mankind by a Mediator, Jesus Christ, his own eternal Son; wherein a promise of an eternal inheritance is made to man, provided he is ready and willing to comply with the conditions laid before him: there had been a covenant made by God to the Jewish nation, which engaged to them a present temporal happiness in the land of Canaan, provided they observed the law given to them. Here then a *second covenant* is proposed by God, not offering a present, but a future good; not a temporal, but an eternal happiness: it is a covenant offered by God,—a Being omnipotent, immortal, uncontrollable,—to a series of beings weak, frail, infirm, but capable of subsisting after death. Christ, as the eternal Word of God made flesh, assuming human nature and uniting it to his Godhead, is not the party that enters into covenant, but he is the Mediator between the parties covenanting. God the Father is the party on one side, and he offers peace through the blood of his Son: man is *ὁ διασφαιρῶν*, the party with whom the covenant is made; who is through grace to accept and fulfil the conditions, namely, to believe in, love, and obey Christ through the Spirit of God. Christ is the Person who acts between God the Father and offending man, and brings the conditions of our salvation; but offers them to us through the infinite merit of his death and intercession, and with the promise of his Spirit, without whom we could not in the least degree comply with the conditions, or be in the least degree sanctified and prepared for glory.

Ver. 17. For a testament is of force, &c.] For a covenant made where death is, is valid. The verse may be paraphrased thus: "For you know that sacrificial rites have ever attended the most celebrated covenants which God hath made with man; so that I may say, a covenant is confirmed over the dead; so that it does not avail, nor has any force at all, while he, by whom it is confirmed, liveth." It may be proper to remark, that Parkhurst is of opinion that the word *διασφαιρῶν* should be rendered, when referring to God's transactions with man, not a *covenant*, but an *institution*, or *dispensation*. The word signifies, says Junius, neither a *testament*, nor a *covenant*, nor an agreement; but, as the import of the word simply requires, a *disposition* or *institution* of God: and in this view our English word *dis-*

pen^{sation} seems very happily to answer it; and thus the dispensation of faith, and free justification, of which Christ is the Mediator, is called *new*, in respect of the *old* or *Sinaitical* one, of which Moses was the mediator. See his Lexicon on the words *Βίβλος* and *Διαθήκη*. The apostle having, in these verses, spoken of the nature of covenants or dispensations in the general, proceeds in what follows to apply it to the Mosaic and Christian institutions; shewing, that as Moses, the mediator of the covenant between God and the Jewish people, ratified the covenant by the blood of the sacrifices; so the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and all mankind, ratified the Christian covenant, by the sacrifice of himself, (ver. 26.) the great antetype of all the sacrifices slain under the law; himself, as the destined victim, paying the penalty due on man's part for the broken covenant, and, as the great High priest, entering into the presence of God, once for all, with that atoning blood which he had shed for us, ver. 24.

Ver. 18. Whereupon, neither the first testament, &c.] Whence neither was the first covenant originally transacted, or made without blood.

Ver. 19. For when Moses had spoken every precept, &c.] Moses, in his account of the transaction, Lev. xvi. does not mention all the circumstances spoken of in this verse. St. Paul might very probably have received them from tradition. However, the apostle's account was confirmed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. Ceremonies of a similar kind are prescribed, Lev. xiv. 4-6, 49-52. as in *cleansing the leper*; and it is highly probable, that the sprinkling the blood of the sin-offering might be done in this method. The blood was mixed with water, to preserve it from coagulating; and perhaps to this the mixture of sacramental wine with water, which pretty soon prevailed in the primitive church, might have some intended reference. Owen is of opinion, that the ceremony here referred to, was constantly performed on the day of atonement: it is certain, however, that it is not expressly prescribed in the account given of the ritual of that day.

Ver. 20. Saying, This is the blood of the testament] Of the covenant, that is, the blood by which the covenant between God and this people is ratified and confirmed. Our blessed Saviour seems to have had the passage of Moses here referred to in view, when he gave to his disciples the cup in his last supper: *This*, said he, *is my blood*, even that of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins; Matth. xxvi. 28. The apostle, in the words before us, follows neither the Hebrew nor the LXX; but only gives

22 ^k And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that ^l the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but ^m the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy

places made with hands, *which are* ⁿ the figures of the true; but ^o into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, ^p as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: ^q but now

^k Lev. i—xvi. & 22. 6. & 17. 11. Numb. 31. 23. Lev. iv. v. xvi. ^l Ver. 9, 10. Ch. 10. 1. Col. 2. 17. ^m Ch. 8. 2, 5. Ver. 11. Ch. 10. 4, 10—17. Daniel, 9. 24. Titus, 2. 14. Rev. 5. 9. & 1. 5. 1 Peter, 1. 18, 19. & 3. 18. ⁿ Ver. 9, 23. Ch. 10. 1. Col. 2. 17. ^o Pf. 68. 18. ^p Mal. 2. 19. Luke, 24. 51. Acts, 1. 9. 11. & 3. 21. Rom. 8. 34. Ch. 1. 3. & 9. 20. & 7. 25, 26. & 8. 2, 5. Ver. 12. Ch. 10. 12—14. 1 John, 2. 1, 2. Rev. 8. 3. 1 Tim. 2. 5. Eph. 2. 8. ^q Exod. 30. 10. Lev. 16. 2—34. Ver. 1, 7. ^r Ch. 7. 27. & 10. 10, 14. Rom. 6. 10. 1 Peter, 3. 18. & 1. 19, 20. Gal. 4. 4. Eph. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 10. 11. Daniel, 9. 24.

gives the sense of what he found in the Old Testament, as he does in many other parts of this epistle. It is undeniably plain from hence, (if there wanted further proof,) that he uses the word *διαθήκη* for a covenant, and not for a testament; not only from the Hebrew word *ברית*, *berith*, which he here translates, but from the thing itself, the old law having nothing of the nature of a testament in it. See the *Reflections* on this chapter, where I treat the subject according to our common translation.

Ver. 22. And almost all things are—purged with blood;] Some things by the law were purified or cleansed with water only: Exod. xix. 10. Lev. xvi. 28. others were purified with the water of separation; Numb. xix. 9, 11, &c. other things were cleansed by fire (Numb. xxxi. 22, 23.) and by the water of separation jointly; but, generally speaking, all things were purified by blood; and therefore the apostle makes use of the word *almost*. The last clause was a proverbial saying which is to be met with in the Jerusalem Talmud; and it appears from Lev. v. 11, 13, that this clause also is to be understood with the exception above given: “In general, without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness;” and this was absolutely the case as it related to a future state. This passage appears to be a certain proof that the *sin offerings* were not merely tokens of *friendship restored* between God and the offender; but that the blood was looked upon as the *consideration* on which the pardon was granted.

Ver. 23. It was therefore necessary] The sense stands thus: “It was necessary that these patterns of heavenly things, ch. viii. 5. should be purified with these sacrifices of calves, and goats, &c. but as the heavenly things themselves are unspeakably more noble and excellent, so if they are to be purified by sacrifices, the sacrifices must be more excellent and noble than those legal sacrifices were. Such a sacrifice is Christ, who, though but once offered, effectually answers this purpose.” It seems that the apostle, from speaking thus in the plural number in this verse, takes occasion, in the four last verses, to shew that this one sacrifice of Christ was all that was needful; whereby he in a manner guarded against that ill use which some, notwithstanding his caution, have made of his word. It may perhaps seem strange, that *celestial things* should be spoken of, as needing to be purified and cleansed; but it is to be considered, that as the sacred dwelling and the vessels were esteemed to be polluted by the Israelites, who

in various degrees had access to them; so heaven, if the blood of Christ had not intervened, would have been as it were polluted by the entrance of those who went into it, and had been formerly sinners, had it been possible for them to enter without his sacrifice; but that would have been absolutely impossible without the vicarious punishment unto death of the eternal Son of God in our human nature.

Ver. 24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places, &c.] The apostle here purues his grand point, which was to shew the infinite superiority and preference of the Christian covenant above that of the Jews. The sacrifice of Christ is more valuable than their sacrifices; the place into which Christ entered is much preferable to that into which their high-priesthood entered: the one was made with hands; the other the work of God: the *Jewish tabernacle*, a copy or pattern only; the *Christian*, an original: the Jewish tabernacle made like to things shewn in the mount; the Christian tabernacle, to the heavens themselves.

Ver. 25. Nor yet] *Not, indeed.* See ver. 12. There is an ellipsis in this place, to be supplied from ver. 23, thus: “Nor indeed was it necessary that he should often offer himself.” *With blood of others* means, the blood of bulls and of goats; and is rendered much more agreeably to the original by Dr. Heylin, *with other blood than his own:—* *ἢ αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ.*

Ver. 26. For then must he often have suffered] The apostle's design was, to shew the difference between the high-priest's offering once every year, and Christ's offering once for all;—that had frequent oblation been necessary, then Christ must have offered himself often since the foundation of the world. But, instead of frequent oblation, there was no occasion that he should suffer more than once, in order to obtain the end designed; so that here are two points in which the superior advantage of Christ is evident. *First*, whereas the high-priest took away the sins of the Jews only, and offered sacrifice in order to remove their offences; Christ died for the sins of all mankind. *Secondly*, whereas the high-priest was obliged to do his office annually, and sacrificed annually calves and goats; Christ did his office fully and completely, by one oblation of himself once offered. It is added, *But now once, at the end, or completion of the ages,—he hath appeared, or is manifested.* It is not at the end of the world, but at the completion of certain periods of time, appointed for certain purposes by the divine

once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 ' And, as it is appointed unto men once to die, but ' after this the judgment :
28 So ' Christ was once offered to bear the

† Gen. 2. 17. & 3. 19. Job, 30. 23. Eccl. 12. 7. Rom. 5. 12. † Eccl. 12. 14. Rom. 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Mat. 25. 31—46. Rev. 1. 7. & 20. 11—14. 2 Thess. 1. 6—9. Acts, 17. 31. † Mat. 20. 28. Rom. 5. 6, 8, 15. & 6. 10. & 4. 25. 1 Peter, 3. 18. & 2. 24. 1 John, 2. 1, 2. & 3. 5.

divine Providence. There was an antediluvian age, a patriarchal age, and an age during which the law of Moses was to continue: there were also four ages described in the prophet Daniel, under distinct periods, by a succession of four kingdoms, during the last of which the Son of man was to appear: each of these was properly an *Αἰών*, or age. Christ therefore came not at the end of the world, for that is not yet ended; but at the end of the ages which God had appointed for certain purposes previous to the coming of the Messiah. See ch. i. 2. xi. 13. It is no great matter whether the word ἀφαιρέσις be rendered by putting away, or destruction, or laying aside, or rejecting,—to all which this term is applied: here it signifies to annul, or make void. Dr. Heylin renders it to expiate.

Ver. 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die*] The apostle had several times asserted, that Christ was made like unto us in all things, except sin; and this consideration he seems to allege in this place, in order to clear up what he says of Christ's only dying once. By dying once, he submits to the condition which they were in for whom he died; namely, for the whole world, but especially for them who perseveringly believe.

Ver. 28. *So Christ was once offered*] The comparison here used is this: "Whereas all men die once, and after this there is to be a judgment for them; so Christ died once, and, having offered himself to bear away sin, he too, as well as all others, shall appear a second time, but without sin, or, bearing away sin, as a Judge and Rewarder of those who have lived in expectation of him." As to the phraseology, the design of the apostle is, to represent what our Saviour did for us; and this he does under the character or image of the scape-goat. The scape-goat was to be presented before God, Lev. xvi. 7. and then the sins of the people were to be put upon the head of it; ver. 21. and the goat was to take and bear upon him all their iniquities into a land uninhabited, ver. 22. In like manner our Saviour, once offered to God, shall take upon him the sins of the faithful, (ἀνψεται,) and shall bear, or carry them away. See Matth: xxvii. 28. Rom. viii. 3. Limborch thinks that in the latter part of this verse there is an allusion to the high-priest's coming out to bless the people who were waiting for him in the temple, when the great day of atonement was over; and as he then appeared in his golden garments, whereas before he had officiated in the plain dress of a common priest; and as the trumpet of the jubilee on that year sounded to proclaim the commencement of that happy period, there is not perhaps an image which can enter into the mind of man, more suitable to convey the grand idea which the apostle intended to convey by it, than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the grand solemnity to which it referred. Dr. Heylin renders the last clause of this verse very well, *shall appear the second time without sin, [or without an offer-*

ing for sin, Blackwall,] for the salvation of those who wait for him.

Inferences.—The whole progress of the apostle's argument will lead us to reflect on the reason that we have for thankfulness, whose eyes are directed, not to an earthly sanctuary and its furniture, splendid indeed, yet comparatively dark, mutable, and perishing; but to the holiest of all, the way to which is now clearly manifested. What matter of solid and everlasting joy! that whereas those gifts and sacrifices were incapable of making those perfect who presented them, or attended upon them, and the ordinances of that sanctuary consisted only in meats and drinks, and corporeal purifications and ceremonies; we by faith behold an High-priest of a better and more perfect tabernacle, an High-priest who hath wrought out eternal redemption for all the faithful, and entered once for all into heaven for them! Eternal redemption! who has duly considered its glorious import? To him, and only to him, who has attentively considered it, is the name of the Redeemer sufficiently dear. But O, what short of the possession of it, can teach us the true value! What, but to view that temple of God above, where through his intercession we hope to be made pillars, and from thence, to look down upon that abyss of misery and destruction from which nothing but his Blood was sufficient to ransom us!

Let that blood which is our redemption, be our confidence. We know there was no real efficacy in that of bulls, or of goats, or in the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean. All that these things could do was to purify the flesh, and to restore men to an external communion with God in the Jewish sanctuary. But the blood of Christ can purify the conscience, and restore its peace when troubled, when tortured with a sense of guilt, contracted by dead works, which render us unfit for, and incapable of divine converse. To that Blood therefore let us look: let the death of Christ be remembered, as the great spotless sacrifice by which we draw nigh unto God: and let those virtues and graces which were displayed in it under the influences of that eternal Spirit, which was given unto him without measure, concur with that infinite benevolence which subjected him to it for our sakes, to recommend him to our humblest veneration, and our warmest affections.

What praise then do we owe to that voluntary victim, who made his blood the seal of that better covenant, of which he is the mediator! O, that as all the vessels of the sanctuary, and all the people, were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices, on that day when Moses entered for them into solemn covenant with God; so our souls and all our services might be under the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! By the efficacy of that were the heavenly places sanctified and prepared for all the faithful; by that our way into them is opened: let us daily be looking up to the Lord Jesus Christ

†1.

as

sins of many; and unto them that look for out sin unto salvation. him shall he appear the second time with-

^a Ch. 4. 15. & 7. 26. John, 14. 3. 11. 25. 9. & 35. 4. Mat. 25. 34, 46.

as gone to *appear in the presence of God before us, and entered into heaven with his own blood.* May his death be as efficacious to subdue the power of sin *in our hearts*, as it is to expiate *guilt.* Then, and then only, may we look forward with pleasure to the great solemnities of *death and judgment*, and expect that faithful Redeemer, who though he is to come no more as a *sacrifice for sin*, will then *appear for the complete salvation* of all, who have obediently received him under that character, and *waited for him* according to his word.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle begins with an account of the tabernacle, where the chief part of the service under the Mosaic dispensation, or first covenant, was performed. It consisted of two parts :

1. *The outward*, where stood the candlestick of beaten gold, and the table, with the shew-bread laid thereon; and this was called the sanctuary, where the daily service of God was performed. The whole building was figurative of Christ's body; the candlestick pointed him out as the true light who should come into the world, where, without him, spiritual darkness must have been for ever spread abroad; and the table of shew-bread pointed him out as the living Bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, upon whom his believing people, consecrated to be spiritual priests, feed, and maintain the most endeared communion thereby with each other.

2. *The inward*, which a second veil separated from the outer part of the tabernacle, and was called the holiest of all, the figure of heaven itself, into which none entered but the high-priest alone once a year on the great day of expiation, with the *golden censer* full of incense, which typified Christ's intercession in heaven for his faithful people; and there stood *the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold*, which signified him who was to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, wherein were the tables of the law written with the finger of God, and, by the side of it, *the golden pot that had manna*, which was miraculously preserved from putrefaction, signifying the daily living bread with which Christ feeds his Israel in this howling wilderness, giving them meat to eat which the world knoweth not of. There also was *Aaron's rod that budded*, from a dry stick producing flowers and fruit, emblematic of him who rose as the rod out of the stem of Jesse, to be by divine appointment our High-priest for ever. And over the ark were the cherubims of beaten gold, two winged figures, *shadowing the mercy-seat*, over which the glorious Shechinah dwelt, and on which the blood was sprinkled on the great day of atonement, intimating to us that Christ, as our propitiatory, interposes between the wrath of a holy God and the transgressors of his law, to save his faithful people from the eternal ruin which must otherwise necessarily ensue. But the consideration of the mystical meaning of these things the apostle waves, of which, says he, *we cannot now speak particularly.*

Let us not therefore too curiously pry into them, nor affect to be wise above that which is written.

2dly, The tabernacle being prepared, we are told what service was performed in it.

1. In the outer part of the tabernacle the ordinary priests every day officiated, burning incense, trimming the lamps, and accomplishing all the service appointed them.

2. Into the *second tabernacle*, within the veil, *went the high priest alone once a year*, on one day only, and then *not without blood, which he offered* as an atonement for himself, and for the errors of the people; intimating hereby that there was no access to God but through the blood of atonement, even the Blood of him whom all the sacrifices represented, and whose intercession alone could be available for salvation.

3dly, The apostle proceeds to declare the design of the Holy Ghost in these ritual services.

1. He signified hereby, *that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*: under that dark dispensation, the way of access to a throne of grace and of admission into heaven itself through the blood and intercession of the Redeemer, was not so clearly and fully laid open, as should afterwards be under the gospel.

2. The tabernacle was a *figure for the time then present*, suited to that more obscure dispensation, and the shadow of good things to come, till he who was the substance of them should appear, and then it would become useless.

3. The gifts and sacrifices there offered could not make the worshippers perfect; but though they were available to the purifying of the flesh, and exculpated them from suffering the temporal punishments due to them as offenders against God considered as their *political Sovereign*; they could not purge the conscience from moral evil, appease the fears of guilt, or secure from eternal punishment, any farther than they led them to Christ, who was in these sacrifices prefigured, that so they might be justified by faith; for these sacrifices could little avail, standing *only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances*, and rites which accompanied them, and may be considered as a burden imposed on them until the time of reformation, when Christ in his gospel should free his spiritual Israel from this heavy yoke.

4. Christ hath appeared and accomplished all that was here prefigured concerning him. *But Christ being come an High-priest of good things to come*, on purpose to procure all spiritual and eternal blessings for his faithful people, by, or in a *greater and more perfect tabernacle* above, *not made with human hands, that is to say, not of this building*, not making any part of this lower creation; *neither by the blood of goats and calves*, which was all that the Levitical priests could offer, *but by a sacrifice infinitely more excellent*; he has made the atonement, even by offering his own body on the tree; and with *his own blood*, of everlasting efficacy, *he entered in once into the holy place*, even into heaven itself, there for ever to abide and plead the merit of that sacrifice which he had

C H A P. X.

The weakness of the law-sacrifices. The sacrifice of Christ's body once offered, for ever hath taken away sins. An exhortation to hold fast the faith, with patience and thanksgiving.

[Anno Domini 63.]

FOR the law, ^a having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image

^a Ch. 8. 5. & 9. 9, 11, 23. Col. 2. 17. Ch. 9. 9, 13, 14. & 7. 11, 13. 1. 7. Pl. 103. 12. 1f. 43. 25. & 44. 22. & 1. 18. Micah, 7. 19.

Ver. 5, 11—14.

^b Or they would have, &c.

^c Ch. 9. 14. 1 John,

of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then ^{*} would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, ^b once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

had offered, *having obtained eternal redemption* for all his faithful saints by this one oblation. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, and under the Mosaic economy readmitted those who were unclean, and excluded from the public worship, to the congregation of Israel; how much more shall the blood of Christ, the efficacy of which is so infinitely greater, who through the eternal Spirit which dwelt in his perfectly pure human nature, offered himself without spot to God, a Lamb meet to bleed on God's altar, how shall not this, I say, much more purge your conscience from dead works, from all your sins, however great and aggravated, the wages of which must have been eternal death, and restore you to serve the living God, in all holy and willing obedience, regarding him now as your reconciled God and Father, through the Son of his love, Christ Jesus? Note; (1.) The excellence and availableness of Christ's sacrifice arises from the dignity of his person; he who offered his human nature upon the cross was very God, and that gave infinite value to the blood which he shed. (2.) Sin must eternally have destroyed all the human race but for this one oblation; nothing else could purge the sinner's conscience; but this is all-sufficient to save to the uttermost, and cleanse us from all sin. (3.) All whose consciences are purged by the Blood of sprinkling, experience also the power of changing grace upon their hearts, and are both inclined and enabled in righteousness and true holiness to serve the living God.*

4thly, The gospel dispensation is considered under the nature of a covenant of grace, we receiving all spiritual blessings through this great Mediator between God and man.

And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, securing for his faithful people every blessing, that by means of death, whereby the covenant was ratified, and the full atonement made, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, the efficacy of his sacrifice reaching back to the beginning, as well as to the end of time, they which are called to faith in him, in whatever age they may have lived, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, which promise will be infallibly fulfilled to all of them who are faithful unto death. For as among men where a testament is made, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, before the legacies bequeathed can be

claimed, or paid; so was it necessary that Christ should die; for a testament is of force only after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon, neither the first testament was dedicated without blood of slain beasts, which typified the death and blood-shedding of the great Redeemer. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, which had been sacrificed, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, in token of the ratification of all that was contained in the sacred volume, and of the application of the blessings and benefits contained in the testament to the souls of the faithful; and this was figurative of that blood and water which flowed from the wounded side of the Redeemer, which in its virtue effectually cleanses the consciences of those who believe, from all guilt and defilement. And this Moses bade them particularly to observe, *Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you, whereby it is ratified, and his faithfulness engaged to all his saints, for the fulfilment of all the promises therein contained. Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry, when they were made. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, wherein the sacrifice and death of Christ were constantly held forth to them as the alone meritorious cause of the sinner's acceptance; and that without the shedding of his blood there is no remission of sins.*

5thly, From what he had advanced, the apostle argues,

That it was therefore necessary, by divine appointment, that the patterns of things in the heavens, the tabernacle and all the vessels, should be purified with these typical sacrifices and sprinklings of blood; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these, even the offering of Jesus himself, who by his own blood ratified the covenant of grace; and, being through his sacrifice consecrated to his office as the great High-priest, entered into heaven, there to present his blood before the throne, and prepare mansions for the reception of his faithful people. For Christ is not, like the Jewish high-priests, entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, and effectually to ensure to his faithful saints all the blessings which, by his blood-shedding, he hath purchased: nor was his sacrifice incomplete, as yet again to require that he should

^a I have here, as I generally do in my *Reflections*, followed the common translation, but am still of opinion with Mr. Peirce, Dr. Doddridge, and other eminent commentators, that the word διαθήκη should be rendered *covenant*, and not *testament*; as it is, and must be, in every other part of the New Testament where it is used: and the mediator of a testament, as Dr. Doddridge observes, is a very improper expression. This does not at all affect the necessity and infinite merit of Christ's sacrifice; for the covenant was ratified solely by the shedding of the blood of the God-man, and could not otherwise have been available in the least degree.

3^c But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4^d For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

^c Lev. 16. 21. Ch. 7. 27. & 9. 7. 1. 18. Ver. 5, 11. 1 John, 1. 7.

^d Lev. 16. 14. Numb. 19. 4. II. 1. 11—15. & 66. 3. Hosea, 5. 6. Micah, 6. 6, 7. Ch. 9. 9, 13. 1 Pet.

offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others, of the animals which were sacrificed: (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, and the fall of man;) but now once in the end of the world, at the close of the Jewish economy, and at the beginning of the last and most excellent dispensation, under the gospel, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, suffering in the human nature, and, by the divine glory of his person, offering such a complete and all-availing sacrifice, as never needed a repetition, the efficacy thereof extending to every persevering believer to the latest ages of time. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, returning to the dust from whence they came, and but once, for after this bodily death is the final judgment, when all must appear at God's bar, and stand or fall to eternity: so Christ was once offered upon the cross to bear the sins of many, and made there a full atonement by his one oblation; and unto them that look for him, in faith and love, expecting his return, shall he appear, not as a suffering but a glorified Saviour, without sin, having taken it all away, and being now manifested to bring his faithful people unto that complete and perfect salvation in glory, which he hath obtained for them. Note; (1.) Die we must, such is the divine decree; highly therefore doth it import us to prepare for this awful change. (2.) Judgment follows close at the heels of death; and as the tree falleth, it must lie for ever. (3.) He that suffered upon a cross, shall shortly appear upon the throne, and a terrible Judge will he be found to those who have not embraced him as a Saviour. (4.) It is the character of his believing people, that they look for the day of his appearing, earnestly expecting his arrival, that they may obtain their perfect consummation both in body and soul in his kingdom of everlasting glory.

CHAP. X.

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle, for displaying Christ's dignity as an High-priest, having illustrated his affirmation, chap. viii. 7. That the Levitical priests worshipped God in the tabernacle, with the representations of the services to be performed by Christ in heaven: also, having contrasted the ineffectual services performed by these priests in the tabernacle on earth, with the effectual services performed by Christ in heaven, and the covenant of which they were the ministers, with the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator; and the blessings procured by the services of the Levitical priests in the earthly tabernacles, with the blessings procured by the services performed by Christ in heaven; he in the beginning of this tenth chapter, as the necessary consequence of these things, infers, That, since the law contains nothing but a shadow, or emblematical representation of the blessings to come through the services of the greater and more perfect heavenly tabernacle, and not these blessings themselves, it never can, with the same emblematical sacrifices which were offered annually by the high-priest on the day of atonement, make those who came to these sacri-

fices perfect, ver. 1.—This important conclusion the apostle established still more strongly by observing, that if these sacrifices had made the worshippers perfect, they would have ceased to be offered; because the worshippers being once cleansed, would no longer, as such worshippers, have been distressed with the consciousness of their sins, and with the fear of punishment, ver. 2.—But in these sacrifices there is of course, as it were, a yearly commemoration of sins, by a yearly presentation of the atoning blood of new sacrifices in the most holy place, which shews that their efficacy is so far from extending, as that of the true expiation does, to all nations, times, and places, that it only looks back upon the year completed, and has no influence, even with regard to those persons who are actually present in the temple, on any thing future, ver. 3.—Moreover, in farther proof of his conclusion, the apostle affirmed it to be impossible in the nature of things, that the shedding of the blood of bulls and of goats should, as substitutions, take away the sins of moral agents, ver. 4.—Wherefore, after the Israelites believed that the sacrifices of beasts were real atonements, God the Father, to shew them the folly of that notion, inspired the writer of psalm xl. to foretel what his Son was to say to him, when coming into the world to make a real atonement for the sins of men; namely this, the sacrifices of bulls and of goats and the offerings of the fruits of the earth, though of thine own appointment, thou dost not command any longer, on account of their inefficacy. But thou hast prepared me a body, that I may die a real sacrifice for sin, ver. 5.—Whole burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou hast no pleasure in now, ver. 6.—Wherefore, I said, Behold, I come into the world, to do, O God, thy will in bruising the head of the serpent, which is written concerning me in the beginning of the book of the law, ver. 7.—On these words of Messiah, the apostle remarks, That having first said to God the Father, Sacrifice and offering, and whole burnt-offerings, which are offered according to the law, thou dost not command, neither art thou pleased with them, ver. 8.—And, next, seeing he has said, Behold, I come to do, O God, thy will, by dying as a sin-offering, it is evident that God has taken away his first command appointing the sacrifices of the law, and has abolished these sacrifices, that he might establish his second command, appointing his Son to die in the human nature as a sin-offering to atone for sin, and to render the malicious purpose of the devil abortive in respect to all his faithful people, ver. 9.—By which second command, therefore, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once, ver. 10. From this memorable passage of the xth psalm, we learn that the only real expiation for sin which God the Father ever appointed, is the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son in the human nature; that all the sacrifices which he appointed to the Israelites were nothing but emblems of the sacrifice of Christ; and that the sacrifice of Christ being offered, the emblems of it are now fitly laid aside, that under the gospel-dispensation there might remain in the

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, * Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body * hast thou prepared me :

* Pf. 40. 6—8. Jer. 6. 20. & 7. 22, 23. Amos, 5. 21. Ver. 4. Hosea, 6. 6. Micah, 6. 7. Pf. 50. 9. & 51. 16. If. 1. 11. & 66. 3. * Or thou hast fitted me. Jer. 31. 22. Mat. 1. 20. Luke, 1. 35. Rom. 1. 3. & 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 8.

the view of mankind, no sacrifice having any pretension to take away sin, but the sacrifice of Christ expressly established by God the Father himself, as the meritorious cause of our pardon.

In what follows, the apostle applied to the sacrifices offered by the ordinary priests daily in the outward tabernacle, the argument by which he had proved the inefficacy of the sacrifices offered annually by the high-priest in the most holy place; namely, that the repetition of them shewed their inefficacy, ver. 11.—Whereas Christ through the whole of his life having offered but one sacrifice for sin, sat down at the right hand of God, as having completely finished the expiation, and as taking possession of the government of the universe, ver. 12, 13.—Wherefore, by the one sacrifice of himself, Christ has perfected for ever the sanctified; that is, has obtained an eternal pardon, together with admission into heaven, for all his faithful saints, ver. 14.—This the Holy Ghost testifies, in the before-mentioned account of the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator, ver. 15.—where, among other things, God promises, that the sins and the iniquities of his faithful people he will remember no more, ver. 17.—But, where there is such an entire remission of sins as the faithful shall enjoy, and as this great amnesty implies, there is no more room for any sacrifice for sin which implies that they remain to be expiated.

Here the apostle concludes his admirable reasonings concerning the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. But, before we dismiss the subject, it may be proper to remark, that although the apostle's arguments are formed principally to shew the inefficacy of the sacrifices of Judaism, yet being equally applicable to the sacrifices of Heathenism, they must have been of great use for convincing the Gentiles, that those atonements on which they had hitherto relied, were utterly ineffectual for procuring the favour of God.—Moreover, the apostle having proved that the Levitical sacrifices and services were instituted to be representations of the sacrifice which Christ was to offer, and of the services which he was to perform in heaven, we may infer, that the sacrifices of beasts were instituted by God at the beginning of the world, immediately after the fall, for the same purpose. See Heb. xi. 4. And therefore, although these sacrifices could not take away sin, the appointment of them at the beginning, and the regulation of them afterwards in the Levitical ritual, were matters not unworthy of God, being shadows of the priesthood, sacrifice, and intercession of Christ. Besides, when Christ, the High-priest appointed by the oath of God, actually came, a great lustré of evidence was thrown on his character and ministrations, by their having been prefigured in the Levitical institutions.—In short, though the apostle has denied that the sacrifices of the law were real atonements, yet by shewing the Jewish institutions in their true light, he has preserved to them their whole importance; and by comparing them with the infinitely better institution of the

gospel, he has made us sensible, how preferable the substance is to the shadow, which therefore was with propriety done away under the gospel.

The apostle, having finished the doctrinal part of his letter, proceeds, in the remaining part, to shew what influence the belief of Christ's infinite dignity and power as the Son of God, and of the efficacy of his mediation as the apostle and high-priest of our profession, ought to have on our temper and conduct. Having, by the sacrifice of himself, not only made a sufficient atonement for our sins, but procured for us the new covenant, we have, through the blood of Jesus, boldness or liberty to enter here below by faith into the holiest,—into close union and communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and, if faithful, shall have liberty at death to enter into the holy places where God dwells, into heaven itself, to be ever with the Lord, ver. 19. This entrance Jesus hath made for us, even a way new and living into the holy place, the habitation of God, through the veil of his flesh: so that death, instead of leading us away for ever from the presence of God, as would otherwise have been the case, carries the faithful into his presence to live with him eternally in unspeakable happiness. Wherefore, being a new and living way into the presence of God, death is stripped of all its terrors; and believers need not be afraid to die, ver. 20.—Also having now a great Priest always residing in heaven, the true *house* or temple of God, to present the prayers and other acts of worship which we offer on earth, ver. 21.—we ought to approach God with a truly devout heart, in the full assurance of being accepted through the mediation of Christ, so as our hearts are cleansed, or that we most sincerely and earnestly desire to have them cleansed, by his Blood, from an evil conscience. Only let us take care that this approach be made in a proper manner, as ever we desire to meet with the divine favour and acceptance; particularly, as the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the Israelites, to cleanse them from any pollutions which they might have contracted, so let us see to it, that we come free from all allowed guilt and indulged sin. And this is indeed our case, if we are true Christians: our hearts are thus sprinkled by the purifying and cleansing blood of Jesus, as well as our bodies washed in the laver of regeneration typified here by the washings under the Mosaic dispensation, ver. 22.—Besides, we must hold fast the confession of our hope through Christ, without regarding the evils which such a confession may bring upon us, ver. 23.—and when in danger of being drawn away from the profession of the gospel by the false reasonings and corrupt examples of unbelievers, we should consider attentively the behaviour of our brethren who have suffered for their faith, and for their love to Christ and to his people, that we may excite one another to love and good works, ver. 24. and should not, through the fear of our persecutors, leave off the assembling of ourselves together for the worship of God, as the custom

6 In burnt-offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, ^h Lo, I come ^h (in the vo-

lume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offer-

^h Gen. 22. 17, 24. 1 Sam. 15. 22. Ps. 40. 8. John, 4. 34. & 5. 30. & 18. 11. & 17. 4.

^b 1 Peter, 1. 20. Prov. 8. 23. Acts, 10. 43. Luke,

24. 27, 44. John, 1. 45. 2 Cor. 1. 20. 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Gen. 3. 15. & 49. 10.

of some is; but rather exhort one another to persevere in the profession of the gospel: the rather, because we see the day of our deliverance from our persecutors and all evil approaching, ver. 25.—The apostle was the more earnest in this exhortation, because if one wilfully renounces the profession of the gospel, after having received the knowledge of the truth with such incontestable evidence and power, there remaineth no sacrifice by which that sin can be pardoned, (see the Notes and Reflections,) ver. 26.—To such apostates there remaineth nothing but a dreadful expectation of the judgment and fiery indignation of God, which will devour them as his adversaries, ver. 27.—For if the despisers of Moses's law were put to death without mercy, although it was only a political law, ver. 28.—of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be counted worthy, who, by openly renouncing the gospel, tramples under foot the Son of God? &c. ver. 29.—The punishment of such an apostate will be heavy and inevitable: for we know the irresistible power of him who hath said, The punishment of the wicked belongeth to me; I will repay them according to their deeds. Moreover, God having promised to avenge his people of their oppressors, he will certainly punish severely those who have insulted his Son and Spirit, ver. 30.—And it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God as an indignant enemy, ver. 31.

This exhortation to beware of renouncing the gospel, the apostle with great propriety pressed on the Hebrews in this part of his epistle, notwithstanding in the preceding sixth chapter he had displayed the heinous nature and dangerous consequences of apostacy. For, after that display, having at great length described the efficacy of Christ's death as a propitiation in procuring the pardon of sin, and explained the gracious nature of the new covenant procured by Christ's death, he naturally supposed that the Hebrews were sensible of the guilt which they would contract, if they renounced the gospel in which these great blessings were made known and offered to mankind. Withal, having described the terrible punishment which awaits apostates, he could not doubt of their being sensible of their danger. Wherefore, to strengthen the good impressions which he charitably supposed his discourse had through grace made on them, he desired them to call to mind the joy which they felt when they first believed the gospel; the courage and constancy with which they then suffered for their faith; the kindness which they shewed to their persecuted brethren; their sympathizing with him in his bonds; and the heavenly recompense with which they took the spoiling of their goods, ver. 32, 33, 34.—and exhorted them, after having suffered so much for their faith, not to cast away their courage, which through the unmerited grace of God would secure to them a great reward in heaven, ver. 35.—provided they continued to suffer patiently, while they were so doing the will of God

by maintaining their Christian profession, ver. 36.—Besides, their troubles would not be of long continuance. For Christ, according to his promise, would in a little time come and destroy the Jewish state, whereby the power of their persecutors would be broken; and in a little time would bring them, if faithful, to heaven, ver. 37.—And, to give his exhortation the greater weight, he put them in mind of what God had said by Habakkuk, namely, *The just by faith, shall live: but if he draw back, my soul will have no pleasure in him*, ver. 38.—Lest however the Hebrews might have inferred from the earnestness of his exhortation, that he suspected they were about to apostatize, he expressed his hope that they would not be of the number of those who draw back to their eternal perdition, but of the number of those who would continue to believe, to the saving of their soul, ver. 39.

Ver. 1. *For the law, having a shadow, &c.*] The *for* in this verse seems to connect the discourse here with the former part of the foregoing chapter; wherein the apostle speaks of the earthly or worldly sanctuary, or holy of holies under the law, as a figure, ver. 9. Nor need we confine the connection merely to what is there said; but refer it more generally to what he has spoken in any part of his epistle before concerning this matter; as particularly ch. viii. 5. ix. 23, 24. The word εἰκονα, rendered *image*, seems from the tenor of the apostle's argument to be used for the *essential*, or *substantial form* of a thing; that is, for the very thing itself; as opposed to its σκία, *shadow*, or *delineation*. So it is paralleled to σῶμα, the *body*, or *substance*, which the apostle elsewhere opposes in like manner to its σκία or *shadow*, Col. ii. 17. Accordingly the Syriac version explains the word εἰκονα by *the substance*; and Chrysostom by *the truth* or *reality*, as opposed to types or emblems. Cicero has used almost the same expression with our author; *Nos veri juris germanaque justitie solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbrā et imaginibus utimur*. See *De Offic.* lib. iii. c. 17. "We have no perfect and express image of true and native justice; but are obliged to "make use of the shadow and picture of it." The apostle is going to shew the imperfection of the law, that it neither could by the frame of it, nor had it in its design, to bring men to perfection; that the good things it promised were but a shadow of the great realities promised by Christ; the veriest *sketch* or *outlines*, in comparison of the perfect and exact *picture*. Dr. Heylin observes here, upon the word *image*, that it does not signify what represents, but the original or model represented by the shadows. The apostle, says he, seems to refer to ch. viii. 5. The sacrifices offered on the day of atonement, being by far the most solemn of any of the expiatory kind among the Jews, are mentioned in this verse with the utmost propriety. Heylin renders the last words, *Render these perfect who approach the altar*. See Parkhurst on the word *εἰκονα*.

Ver. 2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered?*
Many

ing, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same

sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make

¹ Lev. i—xvi. Numb. xxviii. xxix. xv. ² Ch. 2. 10, 11. & 9. 12—14, 26, 28. & 7. 27. & 13. 12. John, 17. 19. Rom. 3. 21. & 4. 25. & 5. 19. & 7. 4. & 8. 3, 4, 33, 34. ¹ Cor. 1. 30. ² Cor. 5. 21. ¹ John, 1. 7. Ver. 14. ¹ Numb. 28. 3, 4. Exod. 29. 38—42. Dan. 8. 11, 12. Lev. i—xvi. Numb. xxviii. xxix. Ch. 7. 11, 18, 19. & 9. 9. Ver. 1, 4. ¹ Ch. 1. 3, 13. & 4. 14. & 6. 19, 20. & 7. 16. & 8. 1. & 9. 17, 24. Ps. 110. 1, 6. Acts, 2. 33, 34. & 3. 21. Eph. 1. 20. Col. 1. 3. ¹ Cor. 15. 25. ¹ Peter, 3. 22. Mark, 16. 19. Luke, 24. 51. ¹ Ps. 110. 1. ¹ Cor. 15. 25. Ch. 1. 13. Dan. 2. 41. ¹ Ver. 10, 11. Ch. 2. 10, 11. & 7. 17, 27, 25. & 9. 14. ¹ Peter, 1. 21. Ch. 3. 7. Rev. 2. 7, 11, 17, 29. Acts, 28. 25. ² Sam. 23. 2. ¹ See ch. 8. 8, 10, 12. Jer. 31. 33, 34. Rom. 11. 27. If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. & 55. 7. Jer. 23. 2. & 50. 20.

Many copies read this without the interrogation, *For then they would have ceased to be offered.* The sense is the same; but the true reading seems to be with the interrogation.

The reasoning of the apostle here is this: "If the yearly sacrifices could make men perfect, there could be no occasion for such continual repetition of them: for if men were once entitled to perfection, the yearly repetition of that which gave them their title, would do no more than what was done already; namely, give them a title to perfection,—just like baptism among Christians. A man baptized is initiated into the visible church of Christ; and were this rite to be repeated every day or every year, it would still be no more than an initiatory rite. Just so the yearly atonement would have given men a title to a state of perfection, had it been designed for such a purpose, which indeed was impossible; but as it was instituted only to procure the good things of this world, which annually are given by God, (except as it prefigured and pointed at Christ, holiness, and heaven,) there was a necessity that those sacrifices should be annually repeated; whereas, could the law have given perfection, one oblation had been sufficient for that." The next verse is rendered very plainly thus:

But in them [in those sacrifices] there is a yearly commemoration of sins. See Lev. xvi. 21.

Ver. 4. *For it is not possible, &c.*] "And indeed the reason of this is plain: for it is in the nature of things impossible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should on the whole take away sins, or make a real atonement to God as the great Governor of the world, for the moral guilt of any transgression; though it may by divine appointment purify from legal defilements, and put a stop to any further prosecution which might proceed in Jewish courts, or any such extraordinary judgment as the peculiar state of things among that people would otherwise require."

Ver. 5. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world,*] The following passage is a citation from Ps. xl. and the use of it plainly enough leads us to understand the words as uttered in the person of the Messiah; which is agreeable

to other places in the Psalms. Indeed, unless we understand the words in this view, the citation must not only appear impertinent, but the proof urged to be none at all. But see the notes on that psalm.

Ver. 7. *In the volume of the book*] That is, *in the Pentateuch.* The apostle argues so plainly from this text, that it proves the psalm to which he refers, to be a literal prophecy of the Messiah: and consequently the 12th verse of it, which affords the only material argument against this interpretation, must either be explained of those iniquities, which though not properly Cain's own, were laid up in him, that is, were atoned for by him, (see Isai. liii. 6.); or rather those calamities which he bore for the expiation of sin.

Ver. 8. *By the law;*] That is, *According to the law.*

Ver. 9, 10. *He taketh away the first,*] "In the forecited passage, by saying, *Sacrifices, &c.* thou wouldest not have, nor didst take any pleasure in them which are offered according to the law, and consequently were, in a sense, agreeable to the will of God, who required them, but not as expiatory: he adds, *Then said I, Behold, I come to do thy will, O God! He abolisheth the former will and prescription of God concerning legal sacrifices, that he may establish the latter, concerning the sacrifice of himself, the great and all-sufficient propitiation; by the which latter will of God (ver. 10.) believers are cleansed from their guilt, through the offering once of the body of Jesus Christ."*

Ver. 11. *And every priest standeth, &c.*] "And this agrees with what I observed before to be the property of a true and effectual atonement: for, indeed, every priest of the Mosaic law standeth daily ministering, and offering the same sacrifices often; which, as appears from that very circumstance of the repetition of them, can never avail to take away the guilt of sins. But he, our Lord Jesus Christ, having offered, &c. ver. 12."

Ver. 14. *For by one offering, &c.*] "For by that one offering up of himself, concerning which we have been speaking, he hath made an expiation, which avails perpetually to render all those who partake of the virtue of

with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them ;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now ' where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin.

19 ' Having therefore, brethren, * bold-

ness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 ' By a † new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ;

21 ' And *having* an high priest over the house of God ;

22 * Let us draw near with a true heart,

Ver. 14. 17. John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. Rom. 5. 2. Eph. 2. 13, 15, 18. & 3. 12. Ch. 4. 16. & 9. 8, 12. 1 Peter, 1. 18. Rev. 5. 9. & 1. 5, 6. * Or liberty. † Or *new made*. Ch. 2. 17. & 3. 1, 6. & 4. 14, 16. & 5. 5, 6, 10. & 6. 20. & 7. 3, 17, 21, 25. & 8. 1. & 9. 11. Ver. 12. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Mat. 16. 18. 1 Peter, 2. 5. Eph. 2. 19-22. Gal. 6. 10. Ch. 4. 16. James, 1. 6. & 4. 8. John, 4. 23, 24. Eph. 3. 12. 1 John, 3. 21. Phil. 3. 3. Ezek. 36. 25. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Ch. 9. 14. Rev. 1. 5. 1 John, 1. 7. & 2. 1. Lev. 16. 4.

" it, completely qualified for the spiritual worship and service of God ; and has rendered all true believers acceptable to God ; and has made effectual provision for raising those sanctified and faithful ones to a state of the most consummate holiness, felicity, and glory ; (ver. 15.) *And of this the Holy Ghost assures us, fully attesting what has been said.*"

Ver. 17. *And their sins, &c.*] He then adds, *And their sins, &c.* So it is read in some copies. There is an ellipsis in the sentence, as it stands in our Bibles, which implies the former words.

Ver. 18. *Now where remission of these is,*] The inference here drawn depends upon the preceding words cited from the prophet. See Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. The apostle quotes here only what was necessary to his purpose, in order to make good his inference ; that where there is forgiveness of iniquity, and a promise for the faithful not to remember sins any more, there can be no occasion for any further oblation for sins.

Ver. 19, 20.] The *argumentative* part of this epistle being now finished, and the great point fully proved,—that the legal sacrifices could never make atonement for sins, though ever so often repeated, and particularly those grand sacrifices which were offered yearly by the high-priest on the great day of expiation ; but that Christ had fully and effectually done this, by his once offering up himself :—the apostle here proceeds to the *practical* application, which is inferred from the foregoing discourse. The great point here urged is that which manifestly runs through the whole epistle, namely, that upon this account Christians should be steadfast in their profession, and their dependance on Christ, without expecting to obtain by the legal sacrifices that advantage which could only be had by Christ. In treating of this, the apostle takes occasion to set forth in the most awful terms the danger of apostasy ; which was a caution very needful for the Jewish converts, who, above all others, were very prone to it. However, suitable to the tenderness wherewith he treats them on a like occasion, (ch. vi. 9, 10.) he softens the severe things that he utters, by mixing some commendations of them, in order that he might give them the less offence. There is another thing which he seems to have had in his eye, and which may be perceived by those who read the remainder of this chapter with a close attention, (though easily missed by careless and hasty readers, as being only obscurely hinted by the apostle, that he might not disgust

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the Hebrews :) and that is, that since the forgiveness of sins was to be obtained, not by the legal sacrifices, but by the sacrifice of Christ ; the *Gentiles*, who had nothing to do with the former, were now upon the same terms with the *Jews*, and so the same privileges and advantages equally belonged to both ; and therefore they should both cordially unite in using them : and though the caution was most necessary for the Hebrews, who were apter to quarrel with the Gentiles than the Gentiles with them, yet, that he might not take off from the edge of his caution where it was most needful, he speaks of their *exciting one another* mutually to their duty, and particularly the duty of love to each other, together with the good fruit which would be produced thereby.

Having therefore, brethren, &c.] " Since therefore, brethren, we who cordially believe in Christ, have such solid grounds of free liberty, and so rich encouragement, as may be gathered from the preceding discourse, for holy freedom and confidence in our approaches to God, as our reconciled God and Father, and so of entering by faith into the holiest of all, even heaven itself ; and who will be admitted into it, if faithful, through the infinite merit of the precious blood of Jesus, our great High-priest and Sacrifice, &c. let us draw near, &c." Dr. Owen observes, that the blood of other sacrifices was to be used immediately upon its effusion ; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use to be offered or sprinkled ; but the blood of Christ is as it were always warm, having the same Spirit of life and sanctification moving in it ; so that the way of approach by it is said to be ζῶσα καὶ ψιφισφαρῶν, *living*, yet (putting it for Christ, who is the way,) always as it were newly slain. As the high-priest could not enter into the holy of holies without blood, we, to whom the true holy of holies is now opened, must enter by the blood of Christ.

Ver. 21. *And having an High-priest over the house of God ;*] That is, over all that name the name of Christ, and hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end ; ch. iii. 6. Our High-priest is the Son of God, the appointed Heir of all things, Lord of all ; therefore we have the strongest motives to hold fast our profession, that can be laid before us.

Ver. 22. *Let us draw near, &c.*] Namely, to that place to which we may have free access, and to which we are so graciously invited : *With a true heart*,—uprightly, sincerely, without any dissimulation or feigned piety : *in full assurance*.

in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 ^r Let us hold fast the profession of our * faith without wavering; (for ^s he *is* faithful that promised);

24 ^a And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 ^b Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

26 For ^c if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 ^d But a certain fearful looking for of

¹ Ch. 4. 14. & 3. 14. Prov. 23. 23. Jude, 3. Rev. 3. 11, 3. Eph. 4. 14. ¹ Peter, 3. 14. * Gr. *hope or confidence.* ² 1 Cor. 1. 9. & 10. 13. ² Cor. 7. 1. ¹ Theff. 5. 24. ² Theff. 3. 3. Ch. 11. 11. Numb. 23. 19. ¹ Sam. 15. 29. Titus, 1. 2. Ch. 6. 18. ³ Ch. 6. 10. & 13. 14. & 23. 1. ¹ Theff. 5. 14, 15. Ch. 3. 13. Prov. 27. 1. ^b Acts, 2. 42. ¹ Cor. 11. 20. Jude, 19. ² Peter, 3. 9, 11, 14. ¹ Pet. 4. 7. Ch. 3. 13. Rom. 13. 11—14. ^c Numb. 15. 30. Mat. 12. 31, 32. Ch. 6. 4—6. ² Peter, 2. 20, 21. ¹ John, 5. 16. Rom. 6. 16. Ch. 9. 26. ^d Lev. 10. 2. Numb. 16. 35. Ezek. 36. 5. Zeph. 1. 18. & 3. 8. Ch. 2. 3. & 12. 25, 29. ² Peter, 3. 7. & 2. 3.

ance of faith; in a full conviction of mind that Jesus is the Christ and our Lord and our God, and of the consequences of that great and important truth which has been so fully explained. This epistle being written to the *Hebrews*, they easily understood what was alluded to in the two next clauses. When the covenant was made in Horeb, Moses took the blood, and *sprinkled it on the people*, &c. See Exod. xxiv. 8. By this ceremony the people were obliged to pay obedience to that law. In the case of the leper, and the leprous house, *he* and *it* were to be sprinkled seven times, in order to be cleansed: Lev. xiv. 7. 51. Here therefore the apostle, by *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, means, “having them cleansed from all “conscioufness of evil,” and being fully sensible of our obligation to become obedient to the will of Christ. The *washing with pure water* does not refer here to Christian baptism, but to the Jewish baptisms in order to their being cleansed. When Aaron was to go into the holy of holies, he was first to wash his flesh with water, Lev. xvi. 4. 24. so was the leper to wash himself in water,—*that he may be clean*. Lev. xiv. 8. And so it was in cases of other uncleannesses: the persons were obliged to bathe themselves in water; Lev. xv. 6. 27. in *running water*, ver. 13. It is in allusion to these customs that the apostle made use of the words *pure*, or *clear water*; meaning that we should keep ourselves free and unspotted from sin.

Ver. 23. *The profession of our faith*] *Of our hope*. So it is in all our manuscript copies but one. See ch. vi. 18, 19. This profession is to be held *ἀναστῆναι*, *without swerving* or bending from it; as some did, ver. 25. and others were likely to do, considering the persecutions they underwent, ver. 33, 34. The last clause of this verse confirms the above reading: *Hold fast your hope,—for he is faithful*, and to be depended on, *who hath promised* an eternal inheritance to them, *who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality*.

Ver. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves*] The word *ἐκκλησιάζω*, rendered *assembling together*, is used but once more in the New Testament, and there it signifies the gathering together unto Christ at the day of judgment, or our being gathered to him at that time; but here it seems rather to refer to public and private meetings or congregations of Christians. The apostle exhorts the Hebrews to frequent such voluntary assemblies; not to fail making the right use of them, by *comforting* one another under their afflictions, and *encouraging* one another to steadiness and perseverance;

and to raise in each other the more alacrity and readiness in mutual good offices, as *they saw the day approaching*. They knew that the day of Christ's final judgment, being certainly future, came nearer and nearer; and from what Christ had said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as to happen during the lives of some who had been present with him, about thirty years before the date of this epistle, (compare Matth. xvi. 28.) they might infer that that *day* was now near, though they were not able to calculate the exact time.

Ver. 26. *For if we sin wilfully*] “For if any of us, who “make a profession of Christ's name, be so much under “the power of unbelief, prejudice, pride, and a worldly “temper, as, not merely through some sudden hurry of “spirit, temptation, or fear of danger; but deliberately, “resolutely, and willingly, with full consent, to reject the “doctrines of the gospel and the good ways of the Lord, “and to turn back to Judaism, Heathenism, or infidelity, “after we have been enlightened in, and convinced of the “truth of the gospel, with respect to the way of salvation “alone by Jesus Christ; the case of such apostates is of all “others the most dreadful: for as all legal sacrifices are of “no farther use in the worship of God, nor ever were “available to purge from the moral guilt of sin; and as “there never was any sacrifice appointed under the law “for presumptuous sinners; so there remains no other, “than the one only sacrifice of Christ, for the remission of sins; and they that reject this last and only remedy, by perfidious unbelief, can have no interest in “it; nor can there be any hope of pardon and acceptance “with God on any other ground whatever.” *The sin* here intended, as appears from all the preceding and following context, is *wilful, resolute, and contemptuous apostacy* from the profession of Christ and his gospel: and therefore, though we ought to be always upon the strictest guard against every known sin, and to be deeply humbled before God, in thorough contrition of spirit, and resolute determination to forsake it, if ever we fall into it; yet this text is not to be understood of every sin which has been committed under the power of temptation, against light and conviction, as some tender-spirited Christians are often apt to apply it, to their own great discouragement and terror, almost to utter despair, but, as observed before, of real, wilful, contemptuous apostacy.

Ver. 27. *But a certain fearful looking for, &c.*] *A certain frightful or formidable expectation of condemnation arising from*

judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 ° He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses :

29 ° Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit

of grace ?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 ° It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 ° But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ;

° Deut. 10. 15. Mat. 18. 16. John, 8. 17. 2 Cor. 11. 2. with Exod. 19. 21. & 22. 18. 20, 23 & 31. 14. & 32. 27. Lev. 24. 11, 14. Numb. 4. 5, 15, 20. & 15. 32. & 25. 7. & 35. 30. Deut. 13. 6, 8. & 17. 6. & 27. 26. 1 Sam. 6. 19. 1 Ch. 2. 3. & 12. 25. 1 Cor. 11. 29. Act. 5. 3, 9. 2 Ch. 13. 20. & 9. 29. Nat. 25. 28. Z. ch. 9. 11. Exod. 24. 8. Ch. 2. 10. & 9. 1, 12. John, 17. 19. Deut. 32. 35. Rom. 12. 19. Pf. 94. 1, 2. Nahum, 1. 2, 6. Deut. 12. 36. Pf. 50. 4. & 135. 14. Luke, 12. 5. Ch. 12. 29. 2 Thess. 1. 9. Pf. 76. 7. & 90. 11. Nahum, 1. 6. Pf. 33. 14. Ver. 25. Ch. 6. 4. Gal. 3. 4. Phil. 1. 29, 30. Col. 2. 1. 2 John, 8.

from the sense of justice in God, and the fitness of punishment to sin: And fiery indignation, *πυρὸς ζήλος*, zeal of fire, such a disposition to punish the adversaries or enemies of the gospel, as may be called a zeal for fire; that is, a thorough disposition and resolution to punish them most severely.

Ver. 28. *He that despised Moses' law*] " This we might easily infer from the nature of things, even though we had not been so expressly warned of it in the word of God; for if any one, of whatever order and dignity, who set at nought the law of Moses, by any presumptuous transgression of it, died without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses, and was excluded any benefit from those sin-offerings which were appointed for offences of ignorance and inconsideration: of how much severer punishment, &c."

Ver. 29. *Who hath trodden under foot, &c.*] Treading under foot, in general, is a mark of contempt, or of setting no value upon what is so treated. Hence it is applied to signify despising or not valuing the gospel of Christ. The next clause means, " And has looked upon the blood of Christ, wherewith he was separated from the world, admitted into covenant with God, and made one of his peculiar people, as a thing of no value or consequence; but as common, and not separated or designed for any peculiar or sacred purpose." Christ's blood was shed to make us a separate people from the world, holy, zealous of good works. Holy and common, or pure and common, in the Greek, are opposed to each other. A man is sanctified, or made holy, when he is brought into covenant with God, by being separated from sin and the world. He is deemed impure, unholy, common, profane, when he is not in covenant with God. Such a treatment of the blood of Christ as above described, offers the most contemptuous injury to the Spirit of grace, by whose miraculous and saving operations the truth of the gospel is demonstrated to such a degree, that the highest blasphemy against him must virtually be expressed by such a conduct as we here suppose.

Ver. 30. *For we know him that hath said,*] Namely, Moses: see Deut. xxxii. 35. It may be inquired how this passage is here applied to those who profess themselves Christians, since in Deuteronomy it evidently relates to the idola-

trous Gentile adversaries of Israel? The answer is easy; for, besides that such as apostatized from the Christian religion declared themselves to be avowed enemies to the institutions of God by Jesus Christ our Lord, (which were much more sacred and important than those by Moses;) besides that, the assertion,—that *vengeance belongeth to God*, &c. is to be considered as a general maxim, and therefore equally applicable in all cases wherein vengeance and a penal recompense are due. The next words may be taken either from the places in Deuteronomy above referred to, or from Pf. cxxxv. 14. where we have exactly the same words; and their force may be this, " That if God will vindicate and avenge the injuries done to his chosen people the Jews, he will much more severely animadvert upon those injuries which were offered to his Christ, his Spirit, and his church."

Ver. 31. *It is a fearful thing, &c.*] *To fall into the hands of God*, imports the being punished more immediately by him, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. 1 Chron. xxi. 13. though in those places God is spoken of as a God graciously correcting; whereas here he is considered as a righteous and angry Judge taking vengeance on his adversaries: and his being the living God, or the God who lives and can take vengeance for ever, may justly add to the consideration of the terribleness of his vengeance. See Matth. x. 28. This verse seems to refer to the just punishments inflicted by men for the breach of the Mosaic law, and to the unrighteous persecutions which Christians endured from their enemies: and it appears to be the apostle's design to put them in mind, that the divine vengeance was incomparably more terrible than both.

Ver. 32. *After ye were illuminated,*] The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was addressed, were Christian converts, long since illuminated, (ch. v. 12. vi. 4.) had suffered great persecutions, and seem not yet to have been free from them. What were the particular persecutions hinted at, we are not positively told; but the words *former days* imply a series of troubles which they had met with, and most probably very many insults from private persons. The words *a great fight, contest, or conflict of afflictions*, (*αθλησι*) alludes to the athletic contests in the Grecian and Roman games, especially those of the gladiators, and gives us a high idea of their courage and bravery. By this term, says Theophylact,

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confi-

dence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

1 Cor. 4. 9. Phil. 1. 7. & 4. 14. 1 Thess. 2. 14. 0 Mat. 5. 12, 41. James, 1. 2. Acts, 5. 41. & 21. 33. Eph. 3. 1, 13. & 4. 1. & 6. 20. Phil. 1. 7, 13. Col. 4. 3, 13. Philim. 10. 13. Ch. 13. 3. 2 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Thess. 2. 14. P. Mat. 5. 12. & 6. 19, 20. & 19. 21. Luke, 12. 33. 1 Tim. 6. 19. 1 Peter, 1. 4. 2 Cor. 5. 1. 1 John, 3. 2. 9 Ch. 2. 1. & 3. 12. & 4. 1, 14. & 12. 15. with Mat. 5. 12 & 10. 32. & 11. 6. P. 19. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Ch. 11. 26. Luke, 21. 19. Mat. 10. 22. & 24. 13. Gal. 6. 9. Ch. 12. 1. 1 Peter, 1. 6, 9, 13. & 5. 10. Col. 3. 14. Rom. 2. 7, 10. Ch. 6. 12, 13. Rom. 8. 25. Hab. 2. 3, 4. Hag. 2. 7. Luke, 18. 8. 2 Peter, 3. 8, 9. 11. 20. 20. & 60. 22. Hab. 2. 4. Rom. 1. 17. Gal. 3. 12. P. 35. 2. Ch. 6. 4-6. Ver. 26, 27. 2 Pet. 2. 15-12.

Theophylact, he declared their courage and bravery; and doubtless, when he was encouraging them to hold out by their own example, it was very proper for him to choose a word which carried with it praise and commendation.

Ver. 33. *Whilst ye were made a gazing stock*] *While ye were openly exposed, as upon a theatre.* St. Paul's expression, 1 Cor. iv. 9. is, "we are made θεατρον, a spectacle, as if we were exposed upon a theatre." Here it is θεατροποιῶμενοι, *openly exposed as upon a theatre*: it is the same image expressed by the same word in effect, in both epistles; which, among many other unanswerable arguments, plainly points out the same inspired author of both. Dr. Hevlin renders the next clause, *one part of you being exposed—while the other sympathized with them, as the companions of those who were so abused.* There was a communion, a fellow-feeling of the evils which the brethren underwent.

Ver. 34. *For ye had compassion of me, &c.*] This verse alone, it appears to me, leaves no room to doubt that St. Paul was the author of this epistle. We may observe, that the apostle having mentioned two things, ver. 33. to set forth the sufferings of the Hebrews, proceeds in this verse to give a proof of both; but does not proceed in the order wherein he had before placed them. The first clause of ver. 34. relates to the latter in ver. 33. and in like manner the last clause in ver. 34. is a proof of the first in ver. 33.

Ver. 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence,*] "Do not cast away, on the contrary, hold fast that liberty, that freedom of access (παρρησιαν), which is granted you to enter into the holy of holies." See ch. iii. 6. and ver. 19. of this chapter.

Ver. 36. *For ye have need of patience;*] "You have need of steady perseverance, or of holding out to the end." See Rev. ii. 10. 17. 26. iii. 3. 11.

Ver. 37. *For yet a little while,*] Some would render the Greek, which is emphatical,—a little, a very little time,—μικρὸν ἔσται ἔσθιν. It has been observed that Ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *the Comer*, is a title given to the Messiah. See Math. xi. 3. and Hab. ii. 3, &c. The Hebrews were to wait with patience and perseverance, that they might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. They were to hold out for some time, be it more or less; and he that is to come, will come, and will not delay his coming beyond the time appointed. See ver. 25.

Ver. 38. *Now the just shall live by faith:*] Dr. Sykes is of opinion, that this sentence would stand better connected with the preceding words, if a full stop were not put after the word *tarry*, but the whole were read in one continued sentence: "He that shall come, will come at the time appointed; and those who are just, from and by their faith in Christ, shall live." St. Paul has, throughout the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, shewn that we are justified by faith: Rom. v. 1. 21. Gal. iii. 11-23. Those then who perseveringly believe in Christ, are to receive the gift of God, which is eternal life. Rom. vi. 23. There is nothing for any man in the next clause; it should be, *If he*, namely, the just man, the person of whom he is speaking, *draw back*: "It, in times of difficulty, the just man by faith, apostatize from the faith whereby he was justified, my soul, faith God, shall have no pleasure in him; but I shall rather, as it were, hate him, and cast him off." — "But we are not (continues the apostle, ver. 39.) of those, who through fear and cowardice draw back, and renounce our profession,—a wickedness which must end in destruction; but we are men of faith, real believers in Christ, who are justified by that faith which terminates to the faithful in the gain of the soul." As the one was to lead to the destruction, the loss of the soul; the other was to lead to the acquisition, or gain of the soul. See 1 Thess. v. 3.

Inferences.—How defective were all legal sacrifices! They and all attending institutions were, at best, only a shadow of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, and the blessings of the gospel introduced by him. The frequent repetition of those sacrifices was a plain proof of their imperfection; they could not prevent the returns of guilt upon the conscience; nor could they possibly take away sin, or be pleasing to God for that purpose. But how meritorious and effectual is the sacrifice of Christ, who freely came into an incarnate state, according to ancient prophecies and records, to fulfil his Father's will by offering up himself! This alone is sufficient for purging all that perseveringly believe in him, from every iniquity, and recommending them to God's acceptance, as a people dedicated to his service; and for perfecting all that concerns them: and our great Lord is now exalted, as a Priest on his throne, at the right

39 But * we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

* 1 Thess. 5. 9, 12. 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14. Ch. 6. 9. John, 3. 16. & 6. 40. 1 Peter, 1. 5.

hand of the eternal Father, where he must reign till all his enemies be subdued under his feet. And O what a blessed security have the faithful people of God in him, and in the covenant of grace, which the Holy Ghost has recorded, with a view to gospel times, in the writings of the Old Testament ! It is now ratified, with all its blessings purchased by the death of Christ, on whose account God will write his law and his gospel in their hearts, and will so thoroughly forgive all their sins, as never more to remember any of them against them. What rich encouragement then have we to draw near to God in Christ, with humble boldness, and full assurance of faith ! Jesus our High-priest has opened a new and living way to the throne of grace, through his crucified flesh, and now appears in heaven itself to recommend all believers and their prayers to divine acceptance, by the sprinklings of his Blood, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit. But how watchful ought we to be against the beginnings of apostacy ! If our love and zeal for every good work be in a declining state, and we grow cool and indifferent about attending on religious assemblies and gospel ordinances, we have reason to fear, lest we fall after the example of some other professors and possessors of Christ, that have revolted from him : and the thoughts of awful trials, and of death and judgment, as near approaching, should excite us to the greater care herein. Ah ! how extremely dangerous is the case of apostates, who, after they have been experimentally converted to God, vilify the Son of God ; depreciate the Blood of the covenant, whereby he was consecrated to his priestly office ! and treat the Spirit of all grace with malignant contempt ! As there is no other sacrifice for sin, than that which they reject and despise, they can have nothing to expect but judgment without mercy, and flaming wrath to consume them : and as their sin is more abundantly aggravated than any transgressions of *Moses's* law, for which offenders were put to death, we must suppose, from the reason of things, that they deserve a proportionally heavier vengeance ; and we are assured from divine testimony, that the great God will assert his own prerogative, in calling them to a severe account for all their wilful abuses of gospel light and grace. Alas ! how dreadful is it to fall into the hands of his provoked power and justice, who lives for ever to inflict the forest punishment upon impenitent sinners ! But whatever losses, troubles, or reproaches, true believers may suffer for Christ, they ought not to cast away their humble confidence and joy in him, and their holy profession of his name ; as being satisfied in their own minds, that they have a more substantial and abiding inheritance in heaven. This is indeed a great recompence of reward, which the faithful God will give his saints according to his gracious promise ; and the prospect of this, together with a remembrance of their former experience of divine light and support under their various tribulations for Christ, and compassionate regard to fellow-sufferers, should encourage their faith and hope, and animate their patience amid further difficulties which may befall them : for in a very little

time the Lord Jesus will certainly come by death and judgment for their salvation.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The weakness and unprofitableness of the Levitical institutions should engage the Hebrews to receive, with greater cordiality, the blessed gospel. For,

1. *The law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, all being figurative and typical of Christ, who should, in the fulness of time, appear as the substance, can never with those sacrifices which they, who were high-priests, offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect, so as to satisfy God's justice, obtain reconciliation, pacify the guilty conscience, and sanctify the unholy heart. For then, if this great end had been fully answered for every faithful soul, would they not have ceased to be offered ? What use would there have been for their repetition ? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins, but have enjoyed a clear sense of pardoning love. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year, which shews that the former sacrifices had not perfectly atoned for them. Nor indeed could they ; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, making an adequate compensation to divine justice, or that the death of a beast should be a proper and effectual atonement for the sin of the soul. A better sacrifice than these was required, and all the use of these typical ones was to lead to Christ, whose blood alone could satisfy for sin. Wherefore,*

2. *When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me, in which to make that atonement for which the legal sacrifices were utterly ineffectual. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo ! I come (as in the volume of the book of prophecy it is written of me) to do thy will, O God ; well pleased and content to suffer all that justice demands, to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, but especially of them who perseveringly believe. Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (which are offered by the law :) then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, and to take away sin by the sacrifice of myself. He taketh away the first covenant, with all the legal sacrifices, because of their insufficiency, that he may establish the second, through his own atoning blood.*

3. *In virtue of his oblation, the most invaluable blessings are secured to us. By the which will of God, as fulfilled in Christ, we are sanctified, our sins expiated, our consciences purged from their defilement, and our hearts cleansed, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all : wherein may be observed another singular excellence of our High-priest and his sacrifice above all others ; for every priest standeth, with awful distance, and continues daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, all which things shewed the imperfection of that dispensation ;*

CHAP. XI.

What faith is. Without faith we cannot please God. The worthy fruits thereof in the fathers of old time.

[Anno Domini 63.]

NOW ^a faith is the * substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

^a Ver. 13. Pf. 27. 13. & 42. 11. John, 20. 29. 1 Thess. 1. 5. Rom. 8. 24. 2 Cor. 4. 18. & 5. 7. * Or ground, or confidence. ^b Ver. 4-39. ^c Gen. 1. Pf. 33. 6. John, 1. 3. Rom. 4. 17. Ch. 1. 2. 2 Peter, 3. 5. ^d Gen. 4. 4, 10. Mat. 23. 35. Ch. 12. 24. 1 John, 3. 12. with Lev. 9. 24. 1 Kings, 18. 38.

dispensation; and, after all, these *can never take away sin*, so as to satisfy God's justice, or relieve the guilty conscience; but this man, the glorious Jesus, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins, fully accomplished his work, and never needed to offer another, and for ever SAT DOWN, in a state of endless rest and most transcendent dignity, on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool, and Satan, sin, the world, and death, shall at last be destroyed for ever. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; by his blood and intercession he has expiated all their sins, made a complete atonement for them, and, through the powerful efficacy of divine faith, their hearts are renewed and dedicated to God, and shall, if faithful, continue so for ever through that complete atonement. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them*, he adds, *and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*; so that they shall be absolutely, fully, and for ever done away, for all his faithful people. Now where remission of these is, in so complete a manner, there is no more offering for sin, the one oblation of Christ's body on the cross having satisfied to the uttermost for all the faithful. Note; All the enemies of Christ and his people must sooner or later become his footstool: he is sat down on his throne, and shall reign till they are utterly destroyed.

2dly, The apostle having concluded the doctrinal part of the epistle, proceeds to make a practical improvement of the whole.

He reminds them of the inestimable privileges which through their great High-priest they enjoyed. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, and freedom and confidence in approaching a reconciled God, by the blood of Jesus, sprinkled with which we are assured of acceptance before him, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated, who is himself the way, the truth, and the life; through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; (for, when his body was broken on the tree, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to shew that every obstruction in the way of the faithful to a throne of grace and glory was now removed;) and having an High-priest, one so great and glorious, over the house of God, let us,

1. Draw near to God in every act of worship, and in the most endeared communion; with a true heart, in all simplicity and godly sincerity, and in full assurance of faith in the all-sufficiency of our Redeemer, and our reconciliation with God through him, having our hearts sprinkled from

2^b For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith^d Abel offered unto God a more

an evil conscience with his atoning blood, which speaks peace from all guilt and condemnation; and our bodies washed with pure water, cleaned by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, which the Jewish washings prefigured.

2. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; not seduced by temptation, dismayed with opposition, or distrusting the grace engaged for our support: for he is faithful that promised, and the righteous may safely repose their everlasting all on his word.

And, 3. Let us consider one another, our respective trials, dangers, wants, and weakness, in order to provoke each other unto love towards Jesus and the brethren, and to good works, such as may adorn our high profession.

4. Let us be united in heart and worship, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, who on weak and frivolous pretences absent themselves from the congregation of the faithful and the communion of the Lord; a sad symptom of declension, and often the prelude to apostacy.

5. Let us never be slack and remiss in holy jealousy over ourselves and our brethren; but be exhorting one another to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, in the use of every appointed means of grace: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching, when the whole Jewish polity and nation shall be destroyed; or when death and final judgment shall arrive. An awful consideration! which, the more deeply it dwells upon our minds, will excite our most awakened solicitude to be always ready for our great change.

3dly, To awaken their most abundant concern, the apostle sets before them the dreadful evil and danger of apostacy.

For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, which does not mean every sin that through infirmity or temptation we may be drawn into, nor even deliberate or repeated acts of sin; but such a course of iniquity, embraced with full consent of the mind, as leads to an utter rejection of the gospel, and denial of Jesus Christ: in this case, the only remedy being rejected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, nor any possibility of pardon, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries; such as must shortly seize the infidel Jews when they shall be buried in the ruins of their city, and awaits the finally impenitent in the great day of God's wrath, when the wicked shall be cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Even he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, and no sacrifice was

excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he testified of his gifts : and by it he being dead obtained witness that he was righteous, God * yet speaketh.

* Or is yet spoken of.

appointed for presumptuous sins : of how much sorer punishment then, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, whose offence is so vastly aggravated, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, treating him with the direct insolence and contempt as an impostor, denying his Deity, despising his atonement, and mocking at his grace ; and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, of less efficacy than the blood of bulls and goats, yea, as the Jews intimated at his crucifixion, viler than that of the greatest miscreants ; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, imputing his miracles to diabolical power, and calling his operations upon the hearts of men delusion and enthusiasm. Such blasphemy is unpardonable, and must bring down the heaviest wrath of an offended God. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord, and punish incorrigible offenders according to their wickedness. And again, The Lord shall judge his people, will detect hypocrites, and as surely destroy the apostate as he will save the faithful. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, whose wrath, if it be kindled, yea but a moment, who may abide it ? Let us hear and tremble, and watch and pray, that we come not into this condemnation, and perish with these despisers.

4thly, To excite the children of God steadily to persevere,

1. He reminds them of the past sufferings which they had so nobly undergone. But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, and brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, and acquitted yourselves manfully, as became those who were lifted under the banner of the cross ; partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions, pointed at, and treated as despicable and ridiculous, and worried with the unrelenting malice and enmity of the wicked world ; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used, nobly owning them in their sufferings for righteousness' sake, sympathizing with them, and affording them every assistance. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, tenderly affected for me, and supporting me to the utmost of your ability ; and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, content, yea, glorying in your sufferings and losses, knowing in yourselves, from the assurance of God's promises and the experience of his grace, that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, where the faints shall enjoy their God for ever. Note ; (1.) Every Christian must expect, and welcome the cross. (2.) Though we may be screened by Divine Providence and human laws from grosser violations of our property, the lash of slander, the bitterness of reproach, and the trial of cruel mockings, these we shall assuredly, more or less, meet with, if we belong to Christ. (3.) God can make his people joyful under all their trials, and neither ashamed nor afraid to suffer for his sake. (4.) If we are of the body of Christ, we shall sympathize with his members, and shall own and honour them under their reproaches for his name's sake.

(5.) If we gain heaven at last, we need be little concerned what we may lose by the way.

2. He exhorts them to stand fast in the prospect of the glory which was before them. Cast not away therefore your confidence, fortitude and holy resolution, which hath greater recompense of reward, and, if persevered in, will secure for you a crown of glory which fadeth not away, and will infinitely overbalance all your losses and sufferings : for ye have need of patience while the conflict continues, that ye may not be weary and faint in your mind ; and that after ye have done the will of God, faithfully obedient to his word, and resigned to his providence, ye might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For yet a little while, a very short moment, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, to execute vengeance upon his enemies, to vindicate the injuries of his faithful people, and save them with his uttermost salvation. Note ; (1.) Faith and patience, held fast, secure our perseverance. (2.) Whatever trials oppress us, it is our comfort that the Judge standeth at the door, and that death shall quickly release us from every burden.

3. He encourages and warns them alternately. Now the just shall live by faith, or the just by faith shall live, shall enjoy the life of God in their souls, and, if faithful unto death, shall live with God to all eternity : but if any man draw back from Christ and his gospel as an apostate, my soul, saith God, shall have no pleasure in him, but, contrarywise, he will be the object of my abhorrence, and suffer all my furious indignation. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, such confidence have I toward you ; but of them that truly believe to the saving of the soul, faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life. Note ; (1.) Many go far in profession, and even possession of grace, who after all prove apostates. (2.) Past experience of God's keeping us, should encourage our increasing confidence in his grace.

CHAP. XI.

THE apostle, in the end of the foregoing chapter, after mentioning the persecutions to which the Hebrews were exposed, had comforted them by suggesting a remarkable saying of the prophet Habakkuk ; *The just by faith shall live*. In this chapter he illustrates that saying, by bringing into the view of the Hebrews examples from their own scriptures, of persons who by a strong faith in God and in his promises, resisted the greatest temptations, sustained the heaviest persecutions, were preserved in imminent dangers, performed the most difficult acts of obedience, and, at length, obtained a distinguished reward. This beautiful discourse, therefore, may be considered as an animated display of the triumphs of faith over the allurements and terrors of the world.

And, first of all, to shew that this noble grace of faith is attainable through the Spirit of God by men in every age and country, the apostle tells us that it consists in such a firm persuasion of the things which God hath declared

5 By faith ^o Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him: for before his

translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 ^f But without faith *it is impossible to*

^o Gen. 5. 22, 24. with 2 Kings, 2. 11. Luke, 24. 51. Acts, 7. 9.

^f Rom. 14. 23. John. 3. 18, 36. & 6. 40. Ch. 10. 22. Deut. 4. 29. Ps. 20. 4. & 40. 16. Jer. 29. 13. Amos, 5. 4. Zech. 8. 22. Ch. 10. 35. & 7. 25.

declared and promised, as clothes them with an evidence equal to that of sense, ver. 1.—and as examples of this faith in the declarations of God, *Abel*, *Enoch*, and *Noah* are mentioned, who were all so firmly persuaded of the truth of the things made known to them by God, that through grace they regulated the whole tenor of their lives by them, ver. 3—7.—Next, as an illustrious example of faith in the promises of God, the apostle mentions *Abraham*, who left his native country and kindred at God's command, and set out for a land which he was afterwards to inherit, not knowing whither he was going. And being come into the promised country, he lived there all his life, with his children Isaac and Jacob the joint-heirs of the same promise, as in a land belonging to other people, because he knew that it was promised to him chiefly as the type and pledge of a better country, ver. 9, 10.—In like manner *Sarah*, Abraham's wife, to whom God promised that she should be *the mother of nations*, lived long in the faith of that promise, though it was not performed to her till she was ninety years old, when she brought forth Isaac, who became the father of children innumerable, ver. 11, 12.—All these patriarchs died, without receiving the country that was promised to them, yet they died in the faith that they should receive it; and by confessing themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, they declared that in the promise they looked for a better country than Canaan, even a heavenly country; consequently, that they expected to be raised from the dead to enjoy that better country.—Moreover, *Abraham*, when tried by the command to offer up *Isaac*, the very son for whom he had waited so long, and by whom he was to have the numerous seed, obeyed without hesitation, firmly believing that after his son was burnt to ashes on the altar, God would raise him from the dead, ver. 17—19.—The same Isaac, and his son Jacob, and his grandson Joseph, when dying, expressed the strongest faith in the promise of God. Particularly Joseph did so. For, before his death, he commanded the Israelites at their departure from Egypt to carry his bones with them into Canaan, ver. 20—22.

Farther, the apostle describes the faith of the Israelites in Egypt; and especially of *Moses*, who, although educated in the court of Egypt, when he came of age, through the faith which he had in God's promises to Abraham and his seed, refused to be called any longer the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and thereby at once renounced all the grandeur and pleasures of the court of Egypt, which as the son of Pharaoh's daughter he might have enjoyed; choosing rather to be evil-treated with the people of God, than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin, ver. 23—26.—By faith, *Moses* carried the Israelites out of Egypt, not afraid of the wrath of Pharaoh who pursued them with the armies of Egypt, ver. 27, 28.—By the same principle the Israelites were emboldened to pass through the Red Sea, which the Egyptians essaying to do, were drowned,

ver. 29.—And with respect to the Israelites who entered into Canaan, although their fathers disbelieved and disobeyed God in the wilderness, they went round Jericho sounding their trumpets, in the firm faith that the walls thereof would fall down by miracle, according to God's promise, ver. 30.—By faith also *Rahab* received the Israelitish spies in peace, and did not perish with the unbelievers, when Jericho was sacked, ver. 31.

Many likewise of the Israelitish *judges*, *prophets*, and *kings*, were most remarkable for their faith. But, because to speak of every individual separately would have been tedious, the apostle introduces them in one group; and, in a noble strain of eloquence, celebrates their fortitude, their victories, and their rewards, all obtained under grace, through the influence of their faith, ver. 32—34.—not forgetting to mention some women whose faith was honoured with particular marks of the divine approbation, ver. 35.—And having thus praised the ancient worthies for the great actions which they performed through faith in God and in his promises, and for the signal deliverances which they obtained, the apostle speaks with equal rapture of the reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, tortures, and death, which others, in later times, endured for the sake of the true religion; so that they were as illustrious for their passive, as the former were for their active virtues, ver. 35—38.

And all these ancient saints and servants of God have received an honourable testimony from him in their respective generations, and in the infallible records of the sacred oracles which are handed down to us, relating to the signal obedience, sufferings, and achievements, which they were animated to by means of the steadfastness and lively exercise of their faith: but yet they never received the actual accomplishment of the grand promise, so as to live to see the exhibition of Christ in the flesh, to fulfil the great work of atonement, and introduce all the glories of the gospel-state through the gift and great outpouring of the Spirit of God, ver. 39.—Now, the reason why God, in his infinite wisdom, did not fulfil the promise of the Messiah and of the Spirit in their days was, because he had a view to us, and has accordingly provided for us, who believe with the heart in Christ as now actually come in the flesh, *this better thing*, with which they were not favoured in their state of nonage under that preparatory dispensation, ver. 40.

This admirable discourse, though more immediately designed for the instruction and consolation of the Hebrews, is most valuable on account of its use to the church in every age. For, in the first place, by putting us in mind, that *Abel* was declared a *righteous person* by God himself, that *Enoch pleased God*, and that *Noah became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith*, we are taught that the justification of mankind by faith did not begin in Abraham, but was the method appointed for the salvation of sinners, from

please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of

them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of

the beginning of the world.—Secondly, By shewing that faith has for its object, not the discoveries of revelation alone, but the manifestation also of the will of God by Christ as the light of the world, and by the general operations of the Holy Spirit, the apostle has displayed the catholic nature and influence of faith, and has taught us, that men of all ages and countries, and under all dispensations, may, through divine grace and the infinite merit of Christ, attain such a degree of faith as is pleasing to God. This instruction was very necessary to those of the Hebrews, who were unwilling to allow that the Gentiles might be saved by faith without obedience to the law of Moses.—Thirdly, By celebrating the great actions and sufferings of the ancients the apostle has taught us, that faith is by no means an inoperative speculative belief of the doctrines of true religion, but an active principle, which leads to the greatest fortitude in doing, and patience in suffering every thing which God commands: in which account of faith St. Paul is supported by St. James, who has in so many words taught that *faith without works is dead*.—Fourthly, By calling faith *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, we are taught that it is faith through grace which gives to the invisible and distant things of the life to come, set forth in the promises of God, the power of operating upon our mind, as if they were actually present to our senses.—Lastly, From the account here given of the faith of Abraham and of his immediate descendants, we learn that these ancient patriarchs knew that the promise of giving *to Abraham and to his seed all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession*, was a promise, not of the earthly country alone, but of a far better country, even a heavenly, of which the earthly country was only a type and pledge; and that as they all died in the firm expectation of inheriting that blessed country, they died in the belief of their resurrection from the dead. Wherefore, the views and expectations of the people of God, even in the most ancient times, though not so full and clear, were not in substance different from the views and expectations which believers now entertain through the more perfect revelation of the gospel.

Ver. 1, 2. Now faith is the substance, &c.] These verses may be paraphrased thus: “As I have now observed, that faith avails to the salvation of the soul, and intend, in the next place, largely to prove it; it cannot but be proper here to acquaint you what that faith is, of which I speak. It is such a firm persuasion, as gives, as it were, a substance or present existence to the good things which we hope for, and which are not yet in being; and as engages us to depend upon the truth of unseen things as really as upon ocular demonstration. That this faith will avail to the salvation of the soul is evident, because the scripture has testified, that on the account of this faith through grace, the celebrated men who lived long ago were acceptable to God.” By the description of faith, ver. 1. the apostle shews what that faith is, which he said ch. x. ver. 39. would avail to the saving of the soul. It is not such a wavering and uncertain

notion as wicked men may have, which is not accompanied with the power of godliness, and does not lead them to act conformably to what they profess to believe; but it is such a real and firm persuasion of the truth of divine revelation through the grace of God, as puts a man in the same temper and disposition of mind as demonstration or eyesight would do.

Ver. 3. Through faith we understand, &c.] “By faith we understand that the worlds were adjusted by the word of God, and the several revolutions of them directed by the operations of his secret providence; as the whole universe was at first created by his power, wisdom, and goodness, and the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. It is certain that no visible cause could produce these things, which would be in effect to suppose them to have produced themselves: we therefore by faith refer them to a divine invisible original.” I have no doubt but *By the word of God, ἡμῶν Θεῶν*, is meant, *by the word of the Divine Logos*. This will appear by comparing the present passage with chap. i. 2, 3. of this epistle, where the same word ἡμῶν is used by the apostle, when he describes the Son as upholding all things *by the word of his power*, and as the glorious Person by whom the Father made the world. So Philo, speaking of the framing of heaven and earth, says, “God made them both, by his illustrious and splendid Logos, ἡμῶν, with a word,” that is, *by the word of his power*. Now whether this word ἡμῶν, be the word of the Father speaking to the Son or Logos, or the word of the Logos himself, saying with power, *Let them be made, and they were made*, it is hence evident, that this Logos must be a Person, and not an attribute. It was this Logos or eternal Word and Son of God, who by the word of his power produced out of a confused chaos all the visible things of the creation, such as the sun, moon, and stars, the earth, and all the objects of our senses: and that *chaos* itself he created by the same word of his power, when nothing had existed from eternity but GOD.

Ver. 4. Abel offered, &c.] The divine original sacrifice seems not only strongly insinuated, but plainly demonstrable from this place. It has been inferred from the words *πλεῖον θυσίαν*,—which may be rendered *a greater, or fuller sacrifice*,—that Cain contented himself with presenting only the *mincha*,—a bread-offering without a victim; whereas Abel sacrificed both; and by presenting a lamb, shewed his faith in the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God. There can be no doubt from the words of the sacred writer, that in whatever Abel's sacrifice consisted, it was his faith which gave its excellence to it. For the next clause, see Gen. iv. 4. It is added, *And by it (his faith), he being dead, yet speaketh*,—recommending to us in all ages, that believing regard to the great Atonement, which he expressed by bringing an animal sacrifice, while Cain contented himself with the fruits of the earth; and though Abel became the early victim of Cain's rage, yet that circumstance, in conjunction with the declaration that he received of the divine acceptance and favour, is very instructive, in

things not seen as yet, * moved with fear, † prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and † became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith † Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after

receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he † sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for † a city which hath

* Or being wary. † Gen. 6. 13, 22. & 7. 5, 23. † Peter, 3. 20. † Peter, 2. 5. Ezek. 14. 14, 20. Mat. 24. 37. Luke, 17. 26. † If. 45. 24. & 54. 17. & 61. 10. Rom. 3. 22. & 4. 13. & 5. 15—19. Phil. 3. 9. † 2 Cor. 5. 21. † 1 Cor. 1. 30. † Gen. 11. 31. & 12. 1, 4. & 15. 14. & 17. 5. Neh. 9. 7. Acts, 7. 2—8. If. 41. 2. † Ver. 10. Gen. 12. 7, 8. & 13. 3, 12, 15—18. & 17. 8. & 18. 2, 6, 10. & 23. 4. Acts, 7. 5. † Ch. 3. 4. & 13. 14. & 12. 22, 28. Rev. 3. 12. & 21. 2, 10, 19. † 2 Cor. 5. 1—8.

in that it affords so powerful an evidence of a future state. And as his blood cried to God for vengeance against his murderer, (Gen. iv. 10, 11.) so it warns others, in all ages, that the righteous blood of God's servants will cry to him for vengeance against them that shed it. See 1 John, iii. 11, 12.

Ver. 5. *And was not found,*] “Any longer among the inhabitants of this lower world.” The circumstances of Enoch's translation are not mentioned; but some have thought this to intimate that he was privately translated, and fought for as Elijah afterwards was. See 2 Kings, ii. 17. and the passages in the margin.

Ver. 6. *But without faith it is impossible to please him!*] This verse is added by the apostle, to complete his reasoning in that which precedes. He had there said, that God translated Enoch without dying, on account of his faith. The proof alleged in that verse was only this, that Moses says *He pleased God*: still it remained to be proved that his pleasing God was an evidence that he had faith. To prove this, the apostle here adds, that it is impossible to please him without faith. The argument now is full and convincing, and stands thus: “The scripture says, that Enoch pleased God, and that on this account God translated him: but this his pleasing God is a demonstration of his faith, since without faith he could not have pleased him; consequently, he was translated upon account of his faith.” The apostle adds the next clause, *For he that cometh*, to prove his first position in this verse; and the strength of the argument is very obvious. The word rendered *cometh*, προσερχόμενον, according to Raphelius, signifies, the coming to God by prayer; and it is used in ch. x. 1, 22. xii. 22, 23. for approaching to God in any act of divine worship: he therefore justly observes, that it may here be taken in a larger sense, and refer to that steady course of piety and holiness, which is implied in *pleasing God*, or *walking with him*. We may just observe further, that what the apostle says in this verse illustrates the account that he gave of faith, ver. 1. The believing *that God is*, is a faith of *something unseen*, and invisible; Rom. i. 20. and the believing that he will, in another world, be *the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, is a faith of *something hoped for*, which is yet at a distance.

Ver. 7. *Moved with fear,*] This instance is fully to the apostle's purpose; because it is evident, from what Noah actually did, that he had a real faith in the being and revelations of God. His faith in God's threatening an universal deluge *moved his fear*,—*ἰσχυρία*, his religious fear,

and reverential regard to God,—(ch. xii. 28.) so strongly, that it actually influenced him to prepare a method for the saving himself from the destruction which was coming upon mankind. His faith was truly the *evidence*, or *conviction of things unseen*: he was, in his day, a *preacher of righteousness*; while all the world about him were grown desperately wicked. When he warned them of the universal deluge, they would not believe his prediction; therefore the flood came, and swept them all away. *Noah's faith* then *condemned* the unbelievers, in the same sense as every good man's holiness, virtues, and exhortations condemn such, as will not attend to and imitate him. The unbelievers were condemned by Noah, as he carefully avoided their practice, which he justly looked upon to be evil, and as their sins were aggravated upon the account of his repeated admonitions. See Titus, iii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 20. By this same faith he became an heir of that righteousness which is by faith. And when the apostle says, that by faith Noah *became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*, he is not guilty of any tautology; but plainly means that Noah, by his own personal faith, became heir of the righteousness which is reckoned to every one who has real faith, or, to every believer. Bishop Cumberland observes, that Noah is the first to whom the name of *righteous man* is applied in scripture.

Ver. 8. *By faith Abraham, &c.*] Abraham was called to go into a land which God promised to shew him. What land that was, did not appear till after he had travelled to Canaan; when God assured him that *that* was the land which he designed to give him; so that he went out from his father's house, purely upon the principle of faith in God, *not knowing whither he went*.

Ver. 9. *By faith he sojourned, &c.*] Abraham went from Mesopotamia, at the command of God, and came to Haran, where he dwelt: thence he removed to the land of Canaan, and travelled to the south-west parts of it, where he lived in tents. The phrase, Παροίκειν ἐς τὴν γῆν, is not the same as the phrase ἐν τῇ γῇ; but implies his sojourning all along, before he got to Canaan, *even till he came to it*, as well as in it: so that this expression shews a continued act of trust in God, from his first setting out from Mesopotamia to Haran, and from thence to Canaan; as a *strange land ἀλλοτρίαν*, signifies a land in which he had no property or claim of right, and in which consequently he dwelt in tents, the proprietors of any settlements generally erecting houses and other buildings, which indicate the land to be their property, and their possession to be permanent. It is plain

foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through faith also ^m Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 ⁿ Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable.

13 ^o These all died ^{*} in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them

afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and ^p confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they ^q seek a country.

15 And truly if they had been mindful of ^r that *country* from whence they came out, ^s they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now ^t they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore ^u God is not ashamed to be called their God; ^x for he hath prepared for them a city.

^m Gen. 17. 17, 19. & 18. 13, 14. & 21. 1, 2. Luke, 1. 36 45. Rom. 4. 19—21. Ch. 10. 23. 2 Chron. 20. 20. If 7. 9. ⁿ Gen. 13. 16. & 5. 5. & 18. 18. & 22. 17. & 26. 14. & 32. 12. Rom. 4. 18, 19. Numb. 1. xxvi. 1 Chron. xxi. xxiii—xxviii. 2 Chron. xiii. xvii. ^o Job, 8. 56. Gen. 48. 21. & xlix. & 50. 24. ^p Gr. according to faith. ^q Gen. 43. 4. & 47. 9. 1 Chron. 29. 15. Ps. 39. 12. & 119. 19. 1 Peter, 1. 17. & 2. 11. ^r Ver. 16. Gen. 49. 18. 2 Cor. 4. 18. & 5. 1—7. Rom. 8. 23—25. Luke, 2. 29. Phil. 1. 23. ^s Gen. 11. 28, 31. Job, 24. 2. Neh. 9. 7. Acts, 7. 2. ^t Gen. 24. 4—6, 8. & 28. 5. & 35. 26. ^u Ver. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 18. & 5. 1—7. Rom. 8. 23—25. Luke, 2. 29. Phil. 1. 23. Ch. 13. 14. Ver. 8. ^x Exod. 3. 6, 15. Mat. 22. 32. Mark, 12. 26. Luke, 20. 37. Acts, 7. 32. ^y Ver. 8. Ch. 13. 14. & 12. 22. Rev. xxi. xxii. 2 Cor. 5. 1. John, 14. 2, 3. Mat. 25. 34. Luke, 12. 32. Phil. 3. 20.

plain from the account of the lives of Isaac and Jacob, that Jacob was born fifteen years before Abraham died.

Ver. 10. For he looked for a city, &c.] “He had dwelt in Canaan, I say, as in a strange country; for he expected, according to God’s promise, to dwell in the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is not removed from place to place, like a tent, but has solid and unshaken foundations; the builder or maker of which city is God himself, who can preserve it for ever.” The grounds of Abraham’s expecting to dwell in an eternal state of blessedness in the heavenly Jerusalem, do not appear to have been any arguments suggested by natural reason, but the express promise of God; for his *faith* here mentioned, is his faith in divine revelation, as faith signifies throughout the chapter. All that he expected in another world, is promised in God’s covenant with Abraham to be his God. There is a strong and beautiful contrast between the expression in this verse, and that of *dwelling in tabernacles* in the preceding verse. *Tents* or *tabernacles* have no foundations; the buildings of a city have. See ver. 16.

Ver. 11. Because she judged him faithful who had promised.] It may seem a difficulty, that the apostle should here tell us that Sarah judged him faithful who had promised, whereas in the history she seems not to have credited what was promised. But the answer is, Supposing that she did not at first believe the possibility or probability of her having a child at that time of life, yet if she afterwards believed, as there is no doubt but she did, upon the more full declaration of Jehovah, it fully answers the design of the apostle.

Ver. 12. Therefore sprang there, &c.] “By this mighty principle of faith in her, and in Abraham, there sprang even from one father, and he, in this respect, as it were dead, a posterity in multitude as the stars of the heavens, &c. according to that divine promise, which carried its efficacy into so many remoter ages, and retains it even to this day.” See my Annotations on the promises made to Abraham, as recorded in the book of Genesis.

Ver. 13. These all died in faith,] Dr. Heylin paraphrases the words thus: *These all died without receiving the good things promised; but by faith they saw them, and believed them, and saluted them at a distance; professing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Ver. 14. Declare plainly that they seek a country.] This translation by no means comes up to the spirit and beauty of the original. The word *πατρίδα* (derived from *πατήρ*, a father,) does not signify a country in general, but such a country as a man’s father dwells in, and possesses as rightfully his own; and wherein consequently his children have a right to dwell with him. This their father’s own country is opposed to a strange or foreign country, ver. 9. wherein they looked upon themselves as *strangers*, sojourners, pilgrims, or travellers; ver. 13. Their father’s country, and what therefore those obedient children of God might in a sense call their native country, or their proper home, is the blessed place where God their Father will dwell with them for ever; even the city of the heavenly Jerusalem. See Rev. xxii. 3—5.

Ver. 16. But now they desire a better country,] This made them carry their thoughts still further; and since they did not enjoy Canaan, nor see how Canaan could answer their expectations, they desired and expected a better country, that is, an heavenly. They had opportunities enough of returning to their own country, had they thought that the promises made to them were to be fulfilled in that country; but since they were persuaded of the truth of what was promised, and did so sincerely embrace it, and yet declared themselves strangers and sojourners here, they must expect a better country, that is, a heavenly, in which they might receive their reward. They knew that God cannot lie or deceive; they knew that God is a rewarder of them that seek him; and yet Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, notwithstanding the particular promises made to them, received nothing here which could in this sense be called a reward. They had not any possession in Canaan; no, not a place to set a foot on, that they could call their own; Acts,

17 ¹ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son;

18 ^{*} Of whom it was said, ² That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 ³ Accounting that God *was* able to raise

him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20 By faith ^b Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, ^c blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

¹ Gen. 22. 2—12. James, 2. 21. 2 Cor. 8. 12. 11, 12.

^b Gen. 27. 27—29, 33, 37, 39, 40.

^{*} Or *to*.

² Gen. 21. 12. Rom. 9. 7. Gal. 3. 29. Gen. 48. 15—21. & 37. 9. & 47. 31.

^c Rom. 4. 17, 19—21. Ver.

Acts, vii. 5. Could any thing be more obvious, than to turn their thoughts upon some place very different from that they lived in?—a better place of abode, wherein they might be made happy? None of them met with any such place here, and therefore they expected and desired a *heavenly city*,—a place of sure reward; and they had the more reason to expect this, because God called himself their God:—*Wherefore God does not make them ashamed, in being called their God.* It may be said, that their reward, or the good things promised them, were all things of this world; (see Gen. xii. 3.) but to be called any one's God, or exceeding rich reward, must imply some advantages or privileges more than those worldly ones. There was therefore something more than the things of this world promised by God to Abraham, when he was pleased to call himself the God of Abraham. It is added, *for he hath prepared them a city.* Neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, had any place in Canaan which they could claim as their own, except a burying-place bought with their money; and if their posterity four hundred years afterwards had possession of Canaan, yet the patriarchs themselves were no more than travellers, and lived in tents: to be therefore their God, or their exceeding great reward, must imply something which did not happen to them upon earth; therefore it was something in a future state, which they expected, and really believed that they should have.

Ver. 17. *By faith Abraham—offered up Isaac:*] See the passages in the margin. It is part of the office of history to assign the causes of the facts related. In those facts therefore which have several causes, of which the principal cannot be sufficiently told, the inferior come in properly to take its place. Thus, though it be very evident that the principal design of the command was to reveal to Abraham, by action instead of words, the redemption of mankind; yet as this was a favour of a very high nature, and conferred on Abraham at his earnest request, it was but fit that he should approve himself worthy of it by some proportionable trial, agreeable to what we find in scripture be God's way of dealing with his faithful servants. On this account, therefore, God was pleased, by the very manner in which this mystery was revealed, to tempt or try Abraham: where the making the favour itself the trial of his deserving it, has all the superior elegance and beauty, which is to be conceived in the dispensations of divine Wisdom only. Now, as the principal reason of the command could not be conveniently told by the sacred historian, this inferior one of the trial is assigned by him, and the apostle from him, with striking truth and propriety. And it is to be observed, that the very manner of recording this

reason shews it to be indeed what has been suggested, an inferior one. For it is not said that God gave this command to try Abraham, which expresses a principal reason; but that in giving the command God did try him, which at most implies an inferior one.

Ver. 19. *Accounting that God, &c.] Reasoning, that God, &c.* Doddridge. Archbishop Tillotson observes, that Abraham's faith was in this respect the more admirable, as, so far as we can learn, there never had been one single instance of a resurrection from the dead in or before the days of Abraham; "whose will," says Heylin, "made a full oblation of his son: his obedience was consummate, and his heart, if we may so speak, was at all the expence of sacrifice." The word *παραβολή*, rendered *figure*, is literally a *parable*, a mode of information either by words or actions, which consists in putting one thing for another. Now in a writer who regarded this commanded action as a representative information of the redemption of mankind, nothing could be more fine or easy than this expression. For though Abraham did not indeed receive Isaac restored to life after a real dissolution, yet the son being in this action to represent Christ suffering death for the sins of the world, when the father brought him safe from mount Moriah after three days, (during which the son was in a state of condemnation to death,) the father plainly received him under the character of Christ's representative, as restored from the dead. For as his being brought to the mount, his being bound, and laid on the altar, figured the sufferings and death of Christ; so his being taken from thence alive, as properly figured Christ's resurrection from the dead. With the highest propriety therefore and elegance of speech, might Abraham be said to receive Isaac from the dead in a *parable* or representation. See Parkhurst on the word Παράβολον.

Ver. 20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau]* He was persuaded that God would one way or other make good his promises to them, though he could not certainly tell how.

Ver. 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, &c.]* He blessed each of them particularly. Moses tells us, that he strengthened himself and sat upon the bed on that occasion, Gen. xlvii. 31. xlviii. 2. When Jacob was sick, it was told Joseph, and he went to him, and carried his two sons with him; and Jacob exerted himself, and sat upon the bed, and blessed the children, and made them his own. It was, no doubt, in this last illness that he laid the obligation upon his son Joseph not to bury him in Egypt, and even made him swear not to do it. And upon this occasion it is said, *that Israel bowed himself upon his bed's head:*

supposing

22 By faith ^d Joseph, when he died, * made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By faith ^e Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were ^f not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith ^g Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 ^h Choosing rather to suffer affliction with

the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach ⁱ of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: ^k for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 ^l By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

28 Through faith ^m he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

^d Gen. 50. 24, 25. Exod. 13. 13, 19. Josh. 24. 52. Acts, 7. 16. ^e Or remembered. ^f Exod. 2. 2. & 1. 16, 22. Acts, 7. 20. ^g Pl. 56. 4. & 118. 6. If. 8. 12, 13. & 51. 7, 12. & 41. 10, 14. Mat. 10. 28. ^h Exod. 2. 1, 3-15. Acts, 7. 21-24. ⁱ Pl. 81. 10. Acts, 7. 23, 25. Job, 20. 5. Luke, 16. 24. ^j Or for Christ. Ch. 13. 13. Acts, 9. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 5. Col. 1. 24. ^k Ch. 10. 35. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. Mark, 8. 38. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 10. 1 Pet. 4. 19. ^l Exod. 10. 28, 29. & 12. 31-41. & 13. 17-21. with 3. 2, 10. & 6. 3-8. Ver. 13. ^m Exod. 12. 2-30.

supposing him lying along, with his head on his pillow, in this recumbent posture, when Joseph brought his children to him, he raised himself up, and laid his hands upon them, leaning upon the top of his staff. It may be observed here, that the same Hebrew word, without the vowels, signifies *a bed, and a staff*. See the note on Gen. xlvii. 31.

Ver. 22. *By faith Joseph, when he died,*] *When he was dying.* See Gen. l. 24. Joseph shewed the reality of his faith by ordering his bones to be carried into Canaan, when the Israelites should depart thither. This proves that he fully depended upon the divine revelation, and so was a proper instance for the apostle to produce in this place.

Ver. 23. *By faith Moses, &c.*] The instance of faith here, is that of *Moses's parents*. It is not improbable, that Moses's father knew what had been promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13. 16. Now reckon by the generations, and by the series of years passed from the covenant with Abraham, and it is plain that the time of servitude was then drawing toward its end. Moses's parents therefore, believing the promises made to Abraham, and seeing the infant a *comely fine child*, they concealed his birth, and did not make away with him, as Pharaoh had commanded. However, the sacred history itself takes no notice of any other reason for their preserving the child, but only his exceeding comeliness or fairness. See Acts, vii. 20.

Ver. 24. *When he was come to years,*] St. Stephen informs us, that Moses was *forty years old* when it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel, Acts, vii. 23. At this age the apostle might well say he was *come to years*, or *was become great* as the expression in the original may be literally rendered; and as it is used in the LXX. version of Exod. ii. 11. and which is common among Greek authors, to express the time of manhood.

Ver. 25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction*] Three months after Moses was born, he was exposed in a bed of bulrushes on the river Nile. Pharaoh's daughter coming by, and guessing it to be one of the Hebrew children, committed him to the care of a nurse of that nation. As he grew up, Pharaoh's daughter had him educated, and adopted him for her own son: and Pharaoh, having no male child, de-

signed him for the heir of his kingdom. Thus arrived to maturity of age, brought up in a manner which kindles the fires of ambition, and surrounded with dignities and honours, he deliberately refused to be the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and to succeed to so opulent a kingdom. The Egyptians he knew, from what had happened to Joseph, were so strongly bigoted to idolatry, that they would not be persuaded to quit it: and unless he complied with the national religion, he was certain that he could not possess the throne. He nobly rejected the offer; he not only rejected this offer, but likewise chose to suffer with the Hebrews, a circumstance which illustrates his character. For, had he refused the kingdom, and chosen the quiet condition of a subject in the middle vale of life, his self-denial had not been so great; and it is too rare to find a man that would choose rather to be oppressed and persecuted, than to receive honour, and to command reverence.

Ver. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*] This signifies "reproach suffered for the sake of Christ," as *the marks of the Lord Jesus* are the marks of the stripes which were borne for the sake of Jesus. See Gal. vi. 17. Dumont supposes, that the Israelites expected deliverance by the Messiah, and that the Egyptians insulted them on that account. *The recompence of reward* could not be *temporal grandeur*, which he might have had with much greater security and advantage in Egypt;—nor the *possession of Canaan*, which he never obtained: it must therefore be the eternal inheritance, which was discovered to him by the divine principle here so largely described and recommended.

Ver. 27. *By faith he forsook Egypt,*] The history here referred to by the apostle, is that of the Israelites going out of Egypt under the conduct of Moses; at which time it is evident Moses had strong faith, and no fear. See Exod. xiv. 13, 14. "Moses, not afraid of the king's wrath or threats, Exod. x. 28, 29. *ἠναρτησεν, persevered,* and *strengthened himself*, as if the invisible Being, who governs all, had been immediately present to his sight."

Ver. 28. *Through faith he kept the passover.*] That is, through faith in the promise recorded, Exod. xii. 12-23.

Ver.

29 By faith ^a they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 By faith ^b the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith ^c the harlot Rahab perished not with them ^d that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of ^e Gideon, and of ^f Barak, and of ^g Sampson, and of ^h Jephthae; of ⁱ David also, and ^k Samuel, and of the pro-

phets:

33 Who through faith ^l subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, ^m stopped the mouths of lions,

34 ⁿ Quenched the violence of fire, ^o escaped the edge of the sword, ^p out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned ^q to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 ^r Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

^a Exod. 14. 13—30. Pl. 78. 13. & 66. 6. & 136. 11—15. Neh. 9. 11.
^b Or *that were disobedient*. ^c Judges, vi—viii. ^d Judges, iv. v.
^e 2 Sam. i—xxiv. 1 Chron. xi—xxix. ^f 1 Sam. i. iii. vii—xii. xxv.
^g Judges, 14. 5. 1 Sam. 17. 34. Dan. 6. 22. ^h Dan. 3. 24, 25.
ⁱ Judges, 15. 15. 1 Sam. xiv. Judges, 7. 21. ^j 1 Kings, 17. 23. 2 Kings, 4. 36, 37. Acts, 22. 24, 29. Ver. 25, 26.

^l Josh. 6. 1—20. ^m Josh. 6. 23—25. & 2. 2—21. James, 2. 25.
ⁿ Judges, xiii—xvi. ^o Judges, xi. xii. ^p 1 Sam. xvi—xxvii. xxx.
^q Numb. xxi. Josh. vii—xii. 2 Sam. v. viii. x. 1 Sam. 12. 3—5.
^r 1 Sam. xx. 1 Kings, xix. ^s 2 Kings, 6. 16. & 20. 7. Job, 42. 10.

Ver. 29. By faith they passed through the Red sea] “By faith operating in Moses, and in its degree in them likewise, they passed over the Red sea, sedately, as if they had marched on dry land, while its waters by the Divine command divided, and left the channel bare to them, so that they completed their march through it, and arrived safely on the opposite shore; which the Egyptians making an insolent and rash attempt to do, were all drowned, and sunk like lead in the mighty waters, which returned upon them with irresistible violence.”

Ver. 30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,] The faith which the apostle here commends, was the faith not only of Joshua, but also of all the pious priests, and of all the religious people. They believed God, that if they, according to his directions, did march round Jericho for seven days together, blow the trumpets and shout, at the time appointed, the walls of it would thereupon fall to the ground. This their faith was perfectly rational, because the promise of the miracle was made by God; to whose infinite power, and not to the probability of the means, they were to look for the accomplishment of it.

Ver. 31. By faith the harlot Rahab] She believed in the God of Israel, who had done so great things for his people; and therefore she entertained the spies who were sent to search the land. See on Joshua, ii. 10, 11.

Ver. 33. Wrought righteousness,] We have the same expression used by St. Peter, Acts, x. 35. *In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness,* &c. The apostle, in this place, does not speak of the general character common to all believers, but has two or three particular persons in his eye, of whom this may be said in an especial manner: as it is of others, that *they subdued kingdoms, or stopped the mouths of lions,* &c. The persons particularly referred to, are Abraham and Phineas, of whom the scripture expressly says, that *their faith was imputed to them for righteousness*: Gen. xv. 6. Pl. cvi. 31. while the Old Testament does not expressly say this of any other. Some have indeed interpreted this, not only of their leading lives exemplary for holiness, but *administering justice to*

others. But I do not know that the phrase has ever that signification.

Ver. 34. Out of weakness were made strong,] *Weakness* is a general word, which implies sickness and ill habit of body, or want of power and strength to resist a superior force. If the former of these be intended; Hezekiah may be the person particularly in view. If it signifies, as it naturally may, an inability to resist enemies, through a smallness of power, (as when a few have been attacked by much superior numbers, or small armies have engaged and been enabled to overcome greater forces,) we have instances in Joshua, ch. xi. Judges, iv. and vii. The last expression is not a very usual one;—*turned to flight the encampments of strangers*: the meaning is, “They have attacked armies encamped, and have put them to flight.” Probably the allusion is to Jonathan’s attacking the Philistines’ garrison, 1 Sam. xiv. 13—15. and to Gideon’s attacking the camp of the Midianites, Judges, vii. 19. See also 2 Sam. v. 9—25.

Ver. 35. Women received their dead raised to life again:] *By a resurrection*; by a restoration to life. What kind of punishment, or rather cruel usage, is alluded to in the next clause, or whether the word be used as a general term for *torturing* and putting to extremity of pain, may be hard to say: but as here are several particular kinds of cruelty mentioned, it seems probable that this is one of that sort. They appear to interpret the word very naturally, who understand it of *beating with clubs* till the poor man dies. The word indeed is used in a more extensive sense, for *putting to death* in any violent manner, without taking in the idea of being beaten to death with clubs: but in this place it seems to be used in its proper sense. The history of Eleazer may be alluded to, who is said to have come of his own accord, *ἐπι τὸ τυμπανόν*, which we render, *to the torment*. 2 Mac. vi. 19. 28. It is certain that he is said to have *been ready to die with stripes*, and that *he endured sore pains in body by being beaten*; but by *stripes* we are not to imagine him ready to die from the effects of whips or thongs, or such sort of small instruments, but *ταῖς πληγαῖς*, with *bruises*, such as arise from being stricken with a great *sick* or *club*, ver. 30. And when it is said that he came of his

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment :

37 They were stoned, they were sawn afunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tor-

mented ;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise :

* 2 Kings, 2. 23. Judges, 16. 25. Jer. 22. 2. & 37. 15. Gen. 39. 20. 2 Kings, 22. 24. Acts, 16. 23. & 22. 24. 1 Kings, 21. 13. 2 Chron. 24. 11. Acts, 7. 57. 1 Sam. 22. 28. 1 Kings, 19. 10. Jer. 26. 23. Acts, 12. 1. Mat. 23. 35, 37. 2 Kings, 1. 8. Mat. 3. 4. 1 Pt. 16. 3. Prov. 12. 26. Gen. 7. 1. James, 2. 5. Rev. 1. 5, 6. 1 Sam. 22. 1. & 23. 19. & 24. 1. 1 Kings, 17. 3. & 18. 13. 2 Kings, 6. 1. Ver. 2—38. 1 Pt. 1. 12. Luke, 10. 23, 24. Ch. 10. 36.

own accord to the *τυμπανον*, to the torment, it means that he came voluntarily to the suffering of this horrid bastinading. It is well known that this punishment is still used in the east, and is common among the Turks at this See day. 2 Mac. viii. 11, 14. and Parkhurst on the word *Τυμπανηζω*.

Ver. 36. Trial of cruel mockings] There can be no doubt but that these mockings were *cruel*; but there was no occasion to add this word to the text, as it is not in the original. See 2 Kings, ii. 23. Gen. xxi. 9. compare with Gal. iv. 29. and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

Ver. 37. They were sawn afunder, &c.] Calmet understands by this expression, *being torn in pieces*, as it were, under a *threshing instrument*, consisting of wooden rollers, full of sharp iron teeth like a *barrow*. Compare Isa. xli. 15. xxviii. 27. 2 Sam. xii. 31. Some have supposed that the phrase *they were tempted*, is an error in the manuscripts, imagining that the climax is thereby entirely broken. But those who wish above all things to be entirely devoted to God, would prefer any torment to poignant temptations which might greatly endanger their fidelity to him. And ecclesiastical history informs us of tyrants who took every possible method to tempt the pious to sin against their God. The LXX, in the case of Elijah, translate the word which we render *mantle*, by *μαλακή*, a *sheep-skin*. That *sheep-skins*, and *goat-skins*, or at least the skins of some animal, were frequently worn by the ancient prophets, is intimated Zech. xiii. 4. The sacred writer having already spoken of the variety of torments which good men through faith had undergone, goes on to speak of other sorts of evils which they had endured; and he uses a word, in conclusion, of a larger signification than what *torments* implies; namely, that they underwent all sorts of evils, *καταχόμενοι*.

Ver. 39, 40. And these all, having obtained, &c.] "All these pious heroes, in different ages, were supported under their respective trials, severe and extreme as they were, by the exercise of a firm and lively faith in the fidelity of God, and the invisible rewards and glories of a future state: and it was by this, under divine grace, that, having obtained a good report, they persevered to the end: but they did not receive the full accomplishment of the promise made to their fathers; God having, according to the counsels of his infinite wisdom, provided something still better for us in the gospel revelation; that so the beauty of his conduct and administration might be the more apparent, and that they without us might not be made perfect, but that all might end with the great-

est dignity and propriety to the glory of God in Christ Jesus." See Acts, xiii. 32, 33.

Inferences.—Let the many glorious examples of faith which are here set before us, animate our souls to imitation, and excite in us a generous desire of acting upon that noble and sublime principle, without which it is impossible to please God. And O, may what we call *our faith* be not merely a speculative and ineffectual assent to the truth, even of the most weighty propositions; but a firm persuasion of their certainty, and a deep conviction of their importance and of our interest in them, that we also may obtain a good report.

May we believe in God as the Former and Upholder of universal nature, as most assuredly existing, and as most bountifully rewarding all that seek him with sincerity and diligence. So shall our sacrifices be acceptable to him, as those of Abel were, while with him we look to that great sacrifice and atonement, of which his victim was the appointed representation. Like Enoch, we shall then be animated to walk with God, and favoured with divine intercourse and communications; and, like Noah, find our safety in the midst of a dissolving world, and, while sinners are condemned, be found the heirs of righteousness.

While we wait for this happiness, let us endeavour to approve ourselves the genuine children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Ever attentive to the divine call, may we, in obedience to it, be willing to go forth, though we do not particularly know whither; and with an intrepidity like his, may we even be ready to exchange worlds at the command of God, ignorant as we are of what lies beyond the grave; thinking it enough, that we know it is a land which God hath promised as the inheritance of his faithful children. It is indeed a city that hath foundations, in comparison of which all the most magnificent and established buildings of the children of men are but mean and moveable tents.

God glories in the title of its Builder and Maker, having formed and fashioned it for the highest displays of his glory and his love; and in reference to it he is not ashamed to be called our God; for by bestowing it upon his faithful people, he answers all which that high and glorious title might import. May we ever desire this as our better country, and live as its citizens ought; confessing ourselves, in reference to it, to be pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. And though we here receive not the accomplishment of the promises, may we keep our eyes on the objects they

40^m God having * provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

^m Rom. 11. 26. Ch. 7. 19, 22. & 8. 6. & 12. 22—24. Rev. 6. 11.

* Or *foreseen*.

they exhibit, how distant soever they seem; and being persuaded of them, may we embrace them; embrace them even with our dying arms, and breathe out our prepared and willing spirits, in full assurance that we are going to receive and possess them.

2dly, Let these glorious instances of faith be preserved in our memory, and have their due influence upon our hearts. When God calls us to resign our greatest comforts, let us think of that heroic act of faith by which Abraham offered up Isaac, and seemed in him to sacrifice all the promises as well as his son. Yet he therein acted a part the most strictly rational; as rightly concluding, that God could with infinite ease call him back to life again, and make a person, who had poured forth all his blood on the altar, and been reduced to ashes there, the father of many nations. Let dying parents commit their children to the care of the ever-living God, like Jacob; and *worship him who hath fed them all their lives long*, and who will never forsake those that put their trust in him. Let those who are called to glorify God by opposing the unjust commands of great and powerful men, remember the parents of Moses, and remember their illustrious child. Does he now repent that wonderful choice which he made at an adult age? does he now wish that he had been called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, rather than the servant of God, faithful in all his house? does he wish that he had secured the treasures of Egypt, and the temporary pleasures of sin, and declined that reproach of Christ, which has ended in eternal glory? Our hearts, our consciences will soon answer; let us then, like him, have respect unto the recompense of reward. Let us endeavour more frequently to direct our regards to God, and live *as seeing him who is invisible*.

And while our faith is thus viewing him, let us look with pleasure to the Blood of sprinkling, which places us under his protection; which introduces us to his favour; which secures us from the destroying angel. He will lead us on safely to his heavenly Canaan, if we fall not by unbelief. He will open our passage through seas of difficulty; he will send down upon us every suitable supply, and would much sooner command the skies to rain down bread, or the flinty rock to melt into streams of water, than desert his faithful people in the wilderness. Let all his wonders of power, and of love to Israel of old, animate our faith; and let them all quicken our obedience; and under a sense of our own weakness, and the importance of this leading, this princely grace, let us daily pray, Lord, increase our faith.

3dly, Is it possible that we should read this animated chapter without feeling our hearts glow with a sacred ambition of acting as becomes those who have heard such tidings and beheld such examples? If the triumphs of faith in Rahab, and Gideon, and Barak, and Sampson, and Jephtha, cannot move us, nor even those of David and of Samuel; if we are insensible of the martial prowess which they exerted in firm dependance on the Lord God of hosts; let

us behold other combats, in which they who seemed weaker, became yet more gloriously victorious. Let us remember, not only the mouths of lions stopped, but the violence of fire quenched, when the faithful servants of God were thrown into it. Yea, let us behold those who endured its *unquenched* violence, and turned all those painful and terrible sensations, into an heroic occasion of expressing the superior ardour of their love to God, and the steadfastness of their faith in him. Let us remember those women, and youths, and children, among the rest of these worthies, indeed among the worthiest of them, who were *tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*.

In vain were all the terrors of persecuting rage and cruelty opposed to these triumphs. They submitted to imprisonment, and banishment, how dear soever their liberty and their native country might be; they quitted their commodious habitations for rocks and caves, and their comfortable apparel for sheep-skins and goat-skins. And when desarts and dens could no longer shelter their wretchedness, but they were seized by their blood-thirsty enemies, they beheld, and endured, undismayed, the most horrid instruments of death. When the piercing sword entered their vitals, when overwhelming stones dashed them in pieces, when the torturing saw was tearing out their very entrails, there was a principle within superior to all these, which nothing could pierce, which nothing could rend away, which nothing could overwhelm. God hath done an honour to our nature in raising up such illustrious persons, *of whom the world was not worthy*, and whose distinguished worth could never have been manifested in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, had it not been called out to such rigorous trials. Well might they rejoice on any terms in their dismissal from a state of existence so far beneath the elevation of their views. And though their names may be perished from among men, and the distinct history of each lost in the crowds of countless multitudes, yet are they all *in remembrance before God*; and the death of each of his saints, in such circumstances, peculiarly *precious in his sight*. They are now bathing in those rivers of delight, which flow through the celestial paradise, and waiting the full consummation of their hope in that *better resurrection*, in the views of which they suffered so bravely.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. An account of the nature and effects of divine faith. *New faith is the substance of things hoped for*, giving such a realizing view of the promises, and such a subsistence of them to the mind, as if they were actually in our possession; and *the evidence of things not seen*, demonstrating the certainty of the invisible things revealed in the divine word, with such a full persuasion, as to act upon the mind, in a great measure, as if they were present.

2. All the saints, from the beginning, have lived under its blessed influence: *For by it the elders obtained a good report*, and were enabled so to walk as to obtain God's approbation

C H A P XII.

An exhortation to constant faith, patience, and godliness. A commendation of the New Covenant above the Old.

[Anno Domini 63.]

WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with ^a so great a cloud of

witneses, ^b let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 ^c Looking unto Jesus the ^{*} author and finisher of *our* faith; who ^d for the joy that

^a Ch. 11. 2—38. ^b Mat. 10. 22. & 16. 24. & 24. 13. Luke 4. 59—62. & 14. 26—33. Rom. 6. 4. & 12. 1, 2. & 13. 11—14. 1 Cor. 9. 24. & 7. 24. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Eph. 4. 22. & 5. 3. Col. 3. 5, 8. Ch. 2. 1. & 3. 6, 12. & 4. 1, 2. & 6. 12. & 10. 19—30. & xi. Jam. 1. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. & 4. 2. Phil. 3. 8—14. ^c John 1. 29. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Ch. 9. 28. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Eph. 2. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 8. Phil. 1. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3. ^d Or beginner. Pf. 110. 1. Luke 24. 26, 46. Acts 3. 15. & 5. 31. Phil. 2. 7—11. ch. 1. 3, 13. & 2. 10. & 3. 6. & 7. 26. & 5. 9. & 8. 1. & 9. 12, 24. & 10. 12. 1 Pet. 1. 11. & 3. 22.

probation of their conduct, this from the first being the divine principle on which alone any work acceptable to God could ever be performed.

3. One of the first articles of faith is this, *That the worlds were framed by the word of God, who spake them into being, when nothing existed before; so that the things which are seen, even all the visible objects of creation, were not made of things which do appear, but from that chaotic mass, which was originally brought into being at the word of the Almighty.*

2dly, The apostle begins to instance the power of divine faith in many of the eminent servants of God, and he begins with the antediluvian worthies.

1. Abel. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, who only brought of the fruit of the ground, but offered no atoning sacrifice in acknowledgment of his sins; whilst Abel to his mincha, or meat-offering, added the blood of the firstlings of his flock, the type of the great atonement whereon his faith rested; by which he obtained witness of God that he was righteous, either by some visible token, as fire from heaven on his sacrifice, or by the witness of the Spirit in his heart, God testifying of his works, that they were accepted through the righteousness of faith; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh, the record of it in the scripture instructs us, that, since the fall of man, the only way of access to God is through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus; and also that vengeance awaits the murderer and persecutor, against whom the blood of innocence and the cries of oppression call for judgment.* *Note;* (1.) The only access to God for sinners, from the beginning, was through the blood of Jesus. (2.) There is a great difference between those who worship God in formality, and those who worship him in faith. It is not the act, but the way and the spirit in which we present our prayers, which makes the acceptable offering. (3.) They who are righteous by faith, and have obtained witness from God, may expect the world's enmity. The first most eminent saint recorded in scripture, was a martyr for religion.

2. Enoch. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, caught up to the paradise of God in body and soul, instantly undergoing the change that fitted him for an eternal mansion in glory; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation to the realms of bliss, he had this testimony, that he pleased God, in a course of humble and holy walking under the influence of divine faith in the expected seed of the woman; see Jude, 14, 15. But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, in any act of religious worship, must believe*

that he is such as he hath revealed himself to the sons of men; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, in the use of all the ordinances which he hath appointed. *Note;* (1.) No service can please God, but what springs from faith as its origin. (2.) God is the portion and exceeding great reward of all his faithful people. (3.) There are appointed means, in which God hath told us, they who wait upon him shall assuredly obtain his blessing; and in the use of them we cannot be too diligent.

3. Noah. *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, which reason could never have suggested, nor mortal known but by divine revelation, moved with fear and religious awe at the apprehension of the approaching judgments, prepared an ark according to God's direction, in defiance of the scoffs of the men of that generation, to the saving of his house from the approaching deluge; by the which he condemned the world; his preaching and labours in building the ark witnessed against that unbelieving world who paid no regard to his works or word during the space of a hundred and twenty years, and thus he left them without excuse; while he himself became hereby heir of the righteousness which is by faith, entitled to the salvation which the infinite merit of that Redeemer in the fullness of time should purchase, whom the ark represented and he by faith apprehended.* *Note;* (1.) God sends his warnings before his judgments: the latter come not till the former have been despised. (2.) Faith begets holy fear, silences all objections, and sets us to work for God in defiance of all opposition. (3.) They who will ever be saved from the deluge of wrath, must by faith take shelter in Christ their ark, for out of him there is no hope.

3dly, From the antediluvian patriarchs the apostle passes on to consider the case of the great father of the faithful, an example that should have peculiar weight with those who valued themselves on being his descendants.

1. He mentions Abraham's call. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out from the land of his nativity into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed without hesitation, fully persuaded of the truth, power, and grace of God to fulfil his promises: and he went out, under divine guidance, and trusting on divine direction; not knowing whither he went, neither the country itself, nor the way which led to it.* *Note;* (1.) Implicit faith is due to God's word; and though we know not how, yet we may be assured, however improbable it may appear to sense and reason, it shall be fulfilled in the appointed season. (2.) They who would go to the heavenly Canaan,

was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, left ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

* Mat. 12. 24. & 9. 34. & 27. 39—47. & 26. 65—68. John 7. 12. & 8. 48. & 9. 16. & 10. 20. Gal. 6. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Rev. 2. 3.

Canaan, must, at God's call, come forth out of a world that lieth in wickedness.

2. His sojourning in Canaan. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, though proprietor of it by the divine grant, yet not holding the least part in possession; dwelling in tabernacles, without any settled abode, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, Jacob being fifteen years old at Abraham's death. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, even the state of eternal glory above, which is represented as a city, (Rev. xxii. 14.) whose builder and maker is God, he having prepared the heavenly mansions for all his faithful saints. Note; (1.) The saints of God are here resident in tabernacles of clay, but mansions of glory await them in a better world. (2.) Faith, which realizes our hopes above, necessarily draws forth our affections and desires after that blest world to which we are tending. (3.) All the trials of this mortal state will be regarded by us as light and transient, when we abidingly keep in view the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

3. The faith of Sarah is observed as closely connected with that of her husband Abraham. *Through faith also Sarah herself, though naturally barren, and now past the time of child-bearing, received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, being ninety years old; because notwithstanding she at first hesitated and laughed, as if the thing was impossible or improbable, yet her faith soon got the better of her unbelief; for she judged him faithful who had promised, and that he was able to perform what he had said. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead through old age, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. Note; Nothing is impossible with God: when he promises, we may trust, and not be afraid.*

4. *These all, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, died in faith, not having received the promises, neither possessing the land of Canaan, nor having seen the Messiah incarnate; but they rested in the fullest assurance that what God had spoken, was as good as done, and sure in the event, having seen them afar off, looking forward to the distant ages when the time of their accomplishment should arrive; and were as fully persuaded of them as if they had lived to see them fulfilled, and embraced them with confidence and holy joy; and, under the influence of them, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, regarding themselves as such, looking for their heavenly home, and living above the world on the glorious hopes which God through Christ had given to them. For they that say such things, and professedly and practically die to the world, declare plainly that they seek a country, and look to a better world as their native land. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned to Ur of the Chaldees again; but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly, even that*

inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which God in Christ, as their covenant God, had revealed unto them, and which they by faith embraced. *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, in a peculiar and most endeared relation: for he hath prepared for them a city, a glorious abode with himself, eternal in the heavens. Note; (1.) In this world we live by faith, not by sight; and yet the certain approach of the promised inheritance can even here, as if possessed, fill us with joy and peace in believing. (2.) True faith has ever this effect, to make us overcome the world, and live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth; we place not our affections upon it, but pass through it as a foreign land, with a holy indifference about its gains, honours, or interests; contentedly put up with any accommodations which we meet with, hasten on with diligence towards our native home, consort with our own countrymen who are travelling the same road and speak the same language, and are happy the nearer we arrive to that land where our affections are placed, and whither our footsteps bend. (3.) The heavenly country may well be the object of the believer's desires, when every thing there is so infinitely preferable to what can ever be found in this miserable world. (4.) They who perseveringly live in faith, will die in faith; that which carries them victorious through the conflicts of life, will make them triumphant over the terrors of death. (5.) If God be our God, therein is comprehended all possible blessedness: more the heart cannot desire, nor imagination conceive.*

5. The apostle returns to mention another and the most eminent instance of Abraham's faith. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, as never mortal was before, to prove the strength and truth of his faith and obedience, offered up Isaac, took every step which evidenced his intention fully to comply with the divine command (see Gen. xxii.): and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son, in whom alone these promises were to have been fulfilled; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; amidst innumerable objections, which sense, reason, nature, even religion, might seem to suggest, he staggered not: looking to the uplifted knife, we still shudder with horror and distress; and what must he then feel that stands ready to plunge it in that dear sacrifice, thy son, thy only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest! We start from the scene; but Abraham dares obey; his faith triumphed over every suggestion, accounting, (λογισαμενος,) reasoning and concluding from the most substantial grounds of evidence, that God, by whose command he knew with the most infallible assurance that he now acted, was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure; he knew that God could as easily reanimate Isaac on the altar, as produce him from the bodies of his parents, that were, in this respect, as good as dead; and he rested in the fullest confidence that the divine promise should somehow or other receive its accomplish-*

4 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,

1 Cor. 10, 13. ch. 10. 31—34.

* Job. 5. 17. Prov. 3. 11, 12. ch. 5. 11. & 6. 11. Rev. 3. 19.

plishment. *Note*; (1.) God knows the purposes that are in the hearts of his people; and what they design in obedience to his will, he regards as acts really performed. (2.) Where God commands, we must stop our ears to all the reasoning of unbelief, fear and selfishness. Duty is ours; events are in his disposal. (3.) Isaac was the figure and type of the death and resurrection of Christ. (4.) We marvel at Abraham's obedience to God's command, *though his son is spared*; with what astonishment and wonder then should we contemplate the love of God, *who spared NOT his own son*, but even for us sinners gave him up to death, even the death of the cross!

4thly, The apostle proceeds to other eminent instances of faith.

1. *Isaac*. He had been mentioned before; another instance of his faith is given, when, in the confidence of the promise, he left his parting benediction with his children, and by divine determination, though undesignedly, being blind, conveyed the principal blessing to his younger son. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come*; to Esau he gave the fatness of the earth, but to Jacob the unspeakable honour of being a progenitor of the Messiah.

2. *Jacob*. *By faith in the promises of God to Abraham, Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph*, by a prophetic spirit foretelling the superior greatness of Ephraim, crossing his hands designedly that his right hand might rest on the head of the youngest; and worshipped God, *leaning upon the top of his staff*. *Note*; (1.) The worship of God will be the faithful believer's exercise to the last: when old age and weakness will not permit him to bend his knees, he will still bow upon his bed, or lean upon his staff, and pour out his humble prayer. (2.) Parents cannot more properly finish their course than by leaving with their children, that surround their dying beds, the profession of their faith, and their final benediction.

3. *Joseph*. *By faith Joseph, when he died, firmly persuaded of that inheritance in Canaan which was assigned to Abraham and his seed, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and gave commandment concerning his bones*, solemnly charging them, under the sanction of an oath, that, when in the expected future day they departed to possess the promised land, his bones might be carried thither. The dust of Canaan was more eligible in his eyes than the noblest sepulchres of Egypt. *Note*; The testimony of dying faints to the truth of God's promises, is a happy means to confirm the faith of their surviving brethren.

4. The parents of Moses. *By faith Moses, when he was born, ordained to be the great lawgiver and deliverer of Israel, and a most eminent type of Jesus their spiritual Redeemer, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child, or fair to God, eminently beautiful, and probably some divine tokens appeared of his future greatness; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment, though, if discovered, their lives had paid for their*

disobedience to his bloody edict. They were persuaded that by a Hebrew, God would work their deliverance; and probably by some divine intimation perceived that this child should be the person. *Note*; (1.) When parents are eminent for their faith, there is a happy prospect that their children will rise up heirs of the same grace. (2.) In days of suffering we may lawfully use every prudent means for our preservation. (3.) An ingenuous countenance often bespeaks the ingenuous mind.

5. *Moses*. Much is spoken of him; for he is famous among the worthies, and has his name in the first rank. Four eminent instances of his faith are here recorded.

[1.] *By faith in the promises made to his ancestors, and in the blessings of a better world, Moses, when he was come to years, arrived at maturity, highly honoured, and eminent for wisdom and learning, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, with all the dignities and advantages thence arising, perhaps even of succeeding to the throne of Egypt; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, as a despised Hebrew, than to enjoy all the glories of the highest human grandeur, and the pleasures of sin, however alluring, which are but for a season, and mult in their issue plunge both body and soul into eternal misery; esteeming the reproach of Christ, and all the contempt, scorn, and persecutions, which for the sake of their fidelity to his worship, and faith in his promises, Israel endured, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, and what in the issue would prove unspeakably his gain in the eternal world; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward, and looked off from the tempting objects of a flattering but deceitful world, to the substantial portion which he expected in the enjoyment of God for ever and ever.* *Note*; (1.) Faith appears then most gloriously triumphant over the world, when, in the midst of greatness and grandeur, the soul can look down on these trifles, and be ready to part with all for the sake of Christ and his cause. (2.) The pleasures of sin, of the sweetest sin, are momentary; but the punishment of them is eternal. They judge therefore as wisely as religiously, who live in holy self-denial. (3.) As the greatest advantages cannot pay us for the least sin, so are the greatest sufferings to be chosen rather than to offend God; and we shall never see cause to regret what we forego or endure for our fidelity to him. (4.) The reproach of Christ is our truest honour: far from being ashamed of it, we should glory therein as our greatest riches. (5.) There is a recompence of reward, the prospect of which should ever animate our souls, and teach us to count every thing else comparatively as dung and dross, so that we may but gain the glorious prize.

[2.] *By faith he forsook Egypt, carrying up with him the children of Israel, confident of the Lord's protection, and not fearing the wrath of the enraged king, nor the mighty hoists with which he pursued them in their way; for he endured undismayed and unshaken, as seeing him who is invisible, higher than the kings of the earth, and able to save to the uttermost.* *Note*; (1.) They who will be faithful

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him :

6 For ^h whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

^h Pl. 94. 12. & 119. 75. Prov. 3. 11. & 13. 24. Jam. 1. 12. & 5. 11. Rev. 3. 19. If 27. 9.

faithful to God, must expect troubles, and be fearless of the wrath of man. (2.) A believing view of the invisible God will strengthen us, amidst all present difficulties, steadily to persevere.

[3.] *Through faith* in God's deliverance of his^s people from Egypt, and of the greater redemption which should be obtained for Israel by the Lamb of God, the great Messiah, *he kept the passover*, and observed the peculiar rite then enjoined of *the sprinkling of the blood* on the doorposts of their houses; *lest he that destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, should touch them*, if the blood prevented not his entrance. *Note*: (1.) Christ is our passover. (2.) His blood upon our consciences is our only protection from the wrath of God.

[4.] *By faith* in the power and promise of God, Moses stretched forth his rod, and the divided waters opened a passage for the discouraged hosts of Israel; and under his guidance, while he led the way, *they passed through the Red-Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians daringly assaying to do, were drowned*, the waters clotting upon them, and every man of that terrible host perished. *Note*: They who persecute God's Israel, only rush upon their own ruin.

6. *By faith*, which Joshua, Caleb, and others exercised in God's power and veracity, *the walls of Jericho fell down* of their own accord, when they blew and shouted, *after they were compassed about seven days*, according to the divine command. *Note*: (1.) When God is for us, all opposition must fall before us. (2.) The weakest means in his hands are sufficient to bring about the greatest events.

7. *Rahab*, a woman, a Canaanite, brings up the rear of these faithful worthies: *By faith* in the promise that God would assuredly give the land of Canaan to the Israelites, *the harlot Rahab*, now turned unto God, whose grace abounds toward the chief of sinners who return to him, *perished not with them that believed not*, of the Canaanites; but with her whole family was preserved, *when she had given that real proof of her faith*, in that she *received, concealed, and dismissed the spies of Israel in peace*. *Note*: (1.) The ruin of sinners is their unbelief. (2.) They who cleave to God's people, and faithfully determine to share their weal and woe, will never have reason to repent their choice.

5thly, Unable to enter particularly into the case of every eminent believer recorded in the Old Testament, the apostle recites a cluster of distinguished names, and of the mighty effects which their faith produced.

1. He recites some of their distinguished names. *And what shall I more say*, when the field is so vast? *For the time would fail me*, if I enlarged on every individual,—*to tell of Gideon* and his noble exploits, recorded (Judges vi, vii, viii. ;) *and of Barak*, who before him was eminent for his faith and victory, (Judges iv.) *and of Sampson*, in life and death so signally remarkable, (Judges xiv. 19. xvi. 27—30.) *and of Jephthah*, before whose faith the routed Ammonites fell, (Judges xi. 23—33.) *and of David also*,

so famous in sacred history for dependance on God, (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5.) *and Samuel*, and of the prophets, who acted and suffered so nobly in the cause of God and truth, under the mighty influence of divine faith.

2. He mentions many of the glorious acts of faith, which these and other worthies like them, shewed; and any one conversant in the book of God may apply them to several there recorded: *Who* (1.) *through faith subdued kingdoms*, as Joshua, David, &c. (2.) *Wrought righteousness* in their private and public capacities, governing with equity; and in their conversation were examples of every thing good and gracious: (3.) *Obtained promises*, God remarkably appearing for them, as he had assured them he would in the hour of trial: (4.) *Stopped the mouths of lions*, as David, Sampson, Daniel; and (still the same faith will produce the same effects, in stopping the mouth of the old lion, that he cannot devour: (5.) *Quenched the violence of fire*, so as to remain unhurt in the midst of the flames, (Dan. iii. 13—27.) (6.) *Escaped the edge of the sword*, when in the most imminent danger of their lives: (7.) *Out of weakness were made strong*, their national affairs restored from the nearest prospect of ruin; their bodily health recovered, when their disease seemed desperate, (2 Kings xx. 1—7.) and though, in comparison with their foes, weak as infancy, yet, in divine strength, they became more than conquerors: (8.) *Waxed valiant in fight*, and, trusting in the Lord, marvellously overcame in the day of battle: (9.) *Turned to flight the armies of the aliens*, though more, and, to human view, incomparably mightier than they: (10.) *Women received their dead raised to life again*, as in the cases of the widow of Zarephath and the Shunamite: and with respect to the power of faith, as evident in the most acute sufferings, we read that, (11.) *Others were tortured*, willingly submitting to the most dreadful torments, *not accepting deliverance*, when only to be obtained at the price of their conscience and some base compliances, rather welcoming death itself than deny the faith, *that they might obtain a better resurrection*, the prospect of eternal glory raising them superior to all the pangs of nature, and all the terrors of death: (12.) *And others had trial of cruel mockings*, ridiculed, treated as despicable, and loaded with every opprobrious name; and withal smitten under severe *scourgings, yea, moreover*, endured the pain and shame of *bonds and imprisonment*: such has been the portion of saints, more or less, in every age: (13.) They were murdered in a variety of ways: *They were some of them stoned; they were sawn asunder*, as the Jewish traditions affirm Isaiah was, at the command of the cruel Manasseh; *they were tempted to deny their profession* and save their lives, by complying with the commands of their persecutors; *they were slain with the sword of tyrants and blood-thirsty men*; and, where some escaped the fury of their foes by flight, their life was embittered as far as man could embitter it, and made scarcely preferable to death itself: for, (14.) *They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins*, having no better covering

7 ¹ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 * But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

¹ Deut. 8. 3, 5. 2 Sam. 7. 14. Prov. 17. 24. & 19. 18. & 22. 15. & 23. 13. & 29. 15. John 16. 20, 33. Acts 14. 22. 1 Thes. 3. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 20. 2 Tim. 3. 12. * Pf. 73. 14, 15. 1 Pet. 5. 9. Rev. 3. 19.

covering to protect them from the inclemency of the skies, being destitute of any abode, of clothes, and necessary food, afflicted with various miseries, and tormented with endless insults and abuses, (of whom indeed the world was not worthy,) nor deserved so great a blessing as their examples, prayers, and admonitions; and by the wicked they were treated as unfit for human society, and driven out from among men to dreary solitudes; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, seeking refuge among wild beasts, more hospitable than their savage persecutors; and in the midst of all their sufferings, faith enabled them to persevere, and brought them at last to their eternal rest. For,

3. Their faith was at last crowned with the enjoyment of that Redeemer in whom they trusted. These all having obtained a good report through faith, enrolled in the sacred records as names held up for imitation to the latest ages, received not the promise, saw not that Messiah incarnate in whom their faith centered; God having provided some better thing for us, the manifestation of his Son in the flesh, to whom they had constantly respect, that they without us should not be made perfect; since not by the legal sacrifices, but by the offering of the body of Jesus, both their sins and ours were expiated; and by the same grace revealed in us by his Spirit, we may be saved under our higher dispensation with a greater and more complete salvation. According therefore to the peculiar advantages which we enjoy under the gospel, a peculiar obligation is laid upon us, that our faith should be suitably operative, engaging us to all cheerful obedience, and making us willing sufferers for our Redeemer's sake.

C H A P. XII.

BY a bold and beautiful rhetorical figure, the apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, represents the patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, and righteous men, whose faith he had celebrated in the preceding chapter, after having finished their own combats with fidelity to God, as standing round and looking on the Hebrews while running in the Christian race. He therefore exhorted them to exert themselves strenuously in the presence of such spectators: but above all to fix their attention on Jesus, whom also he represents as looking on; because his sacred virtues and sufferings were infinitely more remarkable, and far more worthy of imitation, than those of the ancients, whose great actions he had celebrated, ver. 1—4.

Next, for the consolation of such of the Hebrews as were in affliction, the apostle put them in mind of the view which their own scriptures gave them of the afflictions allotted to the people of God. They are chastisements which God, from love, administers to his children, to improve and strengthen their holiness and virtues. And, from that consideration, he exhorted them meekly

and courageously to bear all the evils to which they were exposed on account of the gospel, ver. 5—13.—and to pursue peace with all men, and holiness; because without holiness no man shall see and live with the Lord in the heavenly country, ver. 14.—and to be careful to preserve each other from sin, especially the sin of apostasy, by admonishing such as were in danger of falling away, or who shewed a disposition to sensuality and profanity, like Esau, who, despising his birth-right, sold it for one meal, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Having mentioned Esau's selling his birth-right, to prevent the Hebrews from parting with their birth-rights as the spiritual seed of Abraham, whether from the love of pleasure or from the fear of persecution, the Apostle explained to them the privileges belonging to their birth-right. They were entitled to inherit, not an earthly country after death, but a heavenly country; and were, if faithful, to become inhabitants of the city of the living God, the city which Abraham expected, Heb. xi. 10. and were there to live with God for ever; expressed ver. 14. of this chapter by their seeing God; and were to associate with angels, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and to enjoy all the blessings procured by the shedding of his blood, ver. 18—24.

In the beginning of this epistle the apostle had affirmed, that the same God who spoke to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son Jesus. And this affirmation he had established in the progress of the epistle, by removing all the objections which the unbelieving Jews brought to set aside the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God. In this place therefore, as the improvement of his doctrine concerning the Sonship of the adorable Jesus, the apostle exhorted the Hebrews to beware of disobeying God, who was speaking to them by his own Son, and commanding them to obey his gospel. And to enforce this exhortation, the apostle put them in mind of what befel their fathers in the wilderness, when they refused to obey God's command to go into Canaan. If, said he, the Israelites did not escape unpunished, who in Kadesh disobeyed the sacred oracle which Moses delivered to them from God, ordering them to go up immediately and take possession of the promised inheritance, we, who have that example of disobedience and punishment before our eyes, shall much less escape unpunished, if we turn away from God speaking the gospel to us from heaven by his eternal Son, who now sits at his right hand as the Governor of the world, ver. 25. But, because to embrace the gospel was in effect to relinquish the law of Moses, and because the unbelieving Hebrews were greatly prejudiced against the gospel on that account, the apostle, to persuade them to forsake the Mosaic law and embrace the gospel, quoted a prophesy of Haggai, in which God, who gave

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

¹ Prov. 13. 24. & 19. 18. & 21. 15. & 23. 13. & 29. 15. Eph. 6. 4. Lev. 19. 3. Mat. 1. 6. ^m Mal. 1. 6. Num. 16. 22. & 27. 16. Job. 12. 10. Eccl. 12. 1, 7. Il. 42. 5. & 57. 16. Zech. 12. 1. Acts 17. 25.

gave the law, declared that he would set it aside, and put an end to the kingdom of the Jewish princes who supported it; and also destroy the Heathen idolatry and the kingdoms of the Heathen rulers by whom it was upheld: His voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens, ver. 26.—Haggai adds, chap. ii. 6. and the sea and the dry land. 7. And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come. That this is a prophecy of the abrogation of the law of Moses, and of the destruction of the Heathen idolatry, we learn from God himself, who thus explains what he meant by the shaking of the heavens and the earth, Hag. ii. 21. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth. 22. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the Heathen: For, from this it is plain, first, That the shaking of the heavens, at the coming of the Desire of all nations, means that at his coming, the throne of the kingdom of the Jewish princes who supported the law of Moses, was to be overthrown. Next, That the shaking of the earth means that the strength of the kingdoms of the Heathen princes who upheld idolatry, was to be destroyed by the preaching of the gospel.—Farther, Seeing in the expression, Hag. ii. 6. Yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, there is a reference to a former shaking of the earth, namely, that which happened at the giving of the law, the interpretation given, Hag. ii. 21, 22. of the shaking of the heavens and the earth, by the preaching of the gospel after the coming of the Desire of all nations, leads us to consider the shaking of mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, as emblematical of the destruction of the Heathen idolatry, by the introduction of the law of Moses. The apostle, for the farther information of the Hebrews, told them, that the promise, Yet once I will shake the heavens and the earth, implied that the things shaken and overthrown were to be removed, in order that the things not to be shaken, the Christian church and gospel-form of worship, may remain firmly established to the end of time; so that there are to be no more changes made in the religion of the world, ver. 27.

Having finished his address to the unbelieving Hebrews, the apostle directed his discourse to such of the nation as professed the gospel, saying, Wherefore we, having received a dispensation of religion which is never to be altered, ought to hold fast the gift of that most excellent dispensation, whereby we can worship God acceptably with reverence and religious fear, ver. 28.—For under the gospel, God is as much a consuming fire to those who disobey him by infidelity, or who affront him by apostacy, as he was to the rebellious Israelites under the law, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, seeing] The word also in our translation of this verse should by all means be expunged. The connection is this: "Seeing, therefore, that we Christians are, as it were, surrounded with this great number of be-

lievers, as the spectators and witnesses of our conduct, who at the same time encourage us to follow the example of their faith and patience, that we may be hereafter rewarded with them; Let us lay aside every thing that would hinder us, &c." The word witnesses refers to the Olympic race, where persons not only stood in great crowds to observe the contest, but many were appointed to stand at the goal or mark, to observe who reached it first, and give evidence in favour of the conqueror, who obtained the crown according to their testimony. Preferring this allusion, the words laying aside every weight, or incumbrance, will need no further illustration. We must not understand by the word *ὄγκος*, rendered weight, any particular vice, such as pride, vanity, ambition, or whatever may elate us (which this term sometimes signifies); but any thing and every thing which is burdensome to a Christian in acting steadily and uniformly, according to the will of our Lord: and consequently the word *sin* is to be understood, not as spoken of any one sin, but of every sin which is apt to get round us, and entangle us, and thus to hinder us in our course; — *ἰσχυρισμῶν*. "This is a very difficult word, says Parkhurst, being found in no Greek writer before the time of the apostles. After examining various interpretations of it, both ancient and modern, I acquiesce (says he) in Chrysostom's exposition;— which easily encompasses or surrounds us." It seems very probable, that in this epithet the apostle alludes to the long flowing garments of the ancients, which if not put off in running a race, would cling about their legs, and impede their course.

Ver. 2. Looking unto Jesus] As an example of patience under sufferings, which ought to be imitated by his disciples; as one gloriously recompensed in his human nature for the sufferings that he sustained in it; and as one who will give to his faithful people the same happy repose after their sufferings; He having, as the Author of their faith promised, and being able, as the Finisher of their faith, to confer, that glorious recompence, ch. x. 35, 36. It is not said of our faith, but only *τῆς πίστεως*, of the faith, or faith in general. The word *ἀπορροῦντες*, looking, properly signifies, our taking off our regard to other things, that we may fix them upon Christ. Some have thought that Christ is called the author and finisher of our faith, in allusion to the judges of the games, ver. 1. who set laws before the contenders, whereby they were to govern themselves, and then adjudged the crowns to the conquerors. Thus Christ eases his faithful people of their burdens, animates their faintness, retards the progress of their enemies, and will at length set upon their heads that beautiful diadem which he hath purchased with his own blood. Dr. Heylin, and several others, render the next clause, Who, instead of the joy that lay before him,—meaning the honour and happiness that he might have enjoyed in the present world; but the word *προκειμῆναι* has so evident a reference to the first verse, that it renders this interpretation very unlikely: besides,

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; ^a but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 ^o Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable

fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore ^p lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 ^q And make [†] straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

^a Pf. 119. 67, 71, 75. Prov. 29. 15. Lev. 11. 44. & 19. 2. Deut. 8. 3, 5. Mat. 7. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 4—16. & 2. 5, 9.

18. If. 32. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 17. see ver. 10.

^p Job 4. 3. 4. If. 35. 3.

1 Thes. 5. 14. ch. 5. 11. & 6. 12.

^o Pf. 89. 32. Jam. 1. 4. Prov. 4. 26. Gal. 6. 1.

[†] Or even.

besides, the word *αἰτι* may well signify *set against* that joy; and then the meaning will be, that he despised the shame of the cross, *in comparison* of the joy set before him. Nor can we imagine any love more disinterested than that, which should make his recovering sinners to God and happiness the great joy of his heart; and, in subserviency to the divine glory, the great motive of his actions and sufferings.

Ver. 3. Consider him] The original word *ἀναλογίσασθε* is very emphatical: it is a metaphor taken from arithmetical and geometrical propositions; so that it signifies the great accuracy and exactness, with which they should consider the Author and Finisher of their faith, and especially the analogy between his case and their own.

Ver. 4.] The apostle having encouraged the Hebrews by the examples of others who had patiently suffered for truth and holiness, especially that of Christ, now adds, that they were not yet called out to suffer to the death, and they ought to look on their sufferings as chastisements of a father's hand, and patiently endure them for two reasons; both because every father corrects his children, and because God designed to promote their welfare by chastising them. If others did not faint, when they suffered to the death in the cause of truth and holiness, much less should the Hebrew Christians faint, when they were not called to *resist unto blood*, or to lay down their lives for the gospel.

Ye have not yet resisted, &c.] "Your case, trying as it may seem to you, does not come up to that of your Saviour: you have not yet resisted in the contests for Christ's religion so far as to lose your lives. Though wicked men have troubled you, and you have endured much struggling, in opposing their wickedness, yet hitherto your lives have been safe." Several commentators have observed, that there are many Agonistical terms in this context. The passage before us may allude to the boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often not only besmeared with blood, but sometimes killed by the blows of the *cestus*.

Ver. 6. For whom the Lord loveth, &c.] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in these words: to *receive*, here signifies to have a particular regard for. Comp. Isai. xlii. 1. in the LXX. and see Prov. iii. 11, 12.

Ver. 8. Then are ye bastards, and not sons] The meaning is, "No care is taken of you; no concern is shewn about your welfare."

Ver. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers, &c.] The

awful, yet tender insinuation at the end of the verse, of the terrible consequences of rebellion against the Father of Spirits, (in which there is an allusion to the capital punishments to be inflicted on a disobedient child, (Deut. xxi. 18.) is very remarkable; and an instance of the apostle's forcible manner of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique way, and in very few words. Some would read this verse interrogatively: *Have we then had fathers in the flesh, &c. and revered them?* &c.

Ver. 10. For a few days] For a short time; during our childhood. *They kept us under discipline, as they thought most proper.* The phrase *for a few days*, may be applied both to our earthly parents, and our Heavenly Father; and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation, that this whole life, when compared with our future being, is but *as a few days*; indeed infinitely less than the *days* of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth. For the last clause, see 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 2.

Ver. 11. It yieldeth the peaceable fruit, &c.] "Though at first all chastening is in itself matter of grief, and not of joy, yet afterwards it produces quiet of mind, and such inward peace, in the progress of holiness and goodness, as abundantly compensates the grief at first felt by those who are exercised thereby; *γεννημασμων;* not only corrected, but instructed and edified; setting themselves to search out the proper lessons, which afflictive dispensations are intended to teach." As it is plain from this word, that the apostle alludes to the Grecian games, possibly by the *peaceable fruits of righteousness*, he may refer to the crowns of *olive* given to the victors in the Olympic races, which was an emblem of peace.

Ver. 12. Wherefore, lift up the hands, &c.] It is certain that these are likewise Agonistical phrases: Dr. Heylin renders the verse, *Invalidate then your hands which are remiss, and your knees which are feeble.* "It is a proverbial phrase," says he, importing the renewed force with which a man is animated, when he makes a firm and solemn resolution."

Ver. 13. And make straight paths, &c.] Dr. Heylin paraphrases the verse thus: *Make even paths for your feet, that the lame ankle may not be sprained, but on the contrary recover strength;* that is, says he, "Order your course of life so, as to avoid the occasions of sin; those especially, where in you are more liable to relapse, either by constitutional infirmity, or evil habits before indulged." Such dangerous occasions are spoken of as *offendicula*, stumbling-blocks in our way;—the metaphor is continued in the sequel,

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded; And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

¹ Pl. 34. 14. Mat. 5. 8. Rom. 12. 18. & 14. 17, 19. Exod. 19. 10. 2 Cor. 7. 1. & 6. 17. 1 Thes. 3. 11—13. 2 Tim. 2. 22. Eph. 5. 5, 26. Ch. 2. 11. & 10. 10, 24. 1 Pet. 2. 15, 16. & 2. 1. Rev. 22. 14, 15. & 21. 8. 27. 1 Cor. 6. 9. Gal. 5. 19. Deut. 29. 19. Ch. 4. 1, 11. & 6. 11. & 3. 12. & 10. 23. & 2. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 6. 1. Or fall from: Gal. 5. 4. Deut. 29. 18. Acts, 17. 13. Gal. 5. 9, 12. 2 Tim. 2. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 6. Gen. 27. 28. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. & 10. 8. 2 Cor. 6. 14—17. Eph. 5. 3—5. Col. 3. 5, 6. 1 Thes. 4. 3—7. Ch. 13. 4. 25. 29—34. 1 Cor. 15. 32. Gen. 27. 34, 38. Ch. 6. 6. & 10. 26, 27, 29. Or way to change his mind. Exod. 19. 10, 12, 18, 19. & 20. 18. & 24. 17. Deut. 4. 12, 12. & 5. 27, 23. Rom. 6. 14 & 8. 15. 1 Tim. 1. 7. Exod. xx. & 19. 16, 19. Deut. 5. 5, 24. & 18. 16. & 4. 12. Exod. 19. 13. Gal. 3. 10. Rom. 7. 9—13.

quel, which instructs the sincere believer or genuine penitent in a matter of great moment, and very pertinent to what was said just before, of making fresh resolutions, &c. It also coincides with the important admonition in the beginning of this chapter, that we should cast aside every weight, &c.

Ver. 14.] The sacred writer now proceeds to exhort the Hebrew Christians to the exercise of universal peace with believing Gentiles, as well as with the believing Jews, and to the practice of holiness, that so they might not fail of that glorious reward which was purchased and provided for them by the atonement of the blood of the covenant. He sets home this exhortation, by observing, that they were not now called to the profession and privileges of Judaism, but of Christianity; and that therefore they ought to live in peace with all Christians, and to receive the uncircumcised believers into their communion in a peaceable manner, and to keep themselves interested in the favour of God, by the experience and practice of sincere and universal holiness.

Ver. 15. Looking diligently, &c.] “I have been earnestly exhorting you to cultivate holiness in your own hearts and lives; and I must farther press it upon you, that you endeavour to maintain a friendly and brotherly inspection over each other. Look to it, therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, lest any one, by apostacy from the Christian religion, fall short of the grace of God, under the day of grace and dispensation of the gospel; lest any root of bitterness and poison, springing up unheeded, occasion trouble to the society in general, and by it, before you are aware, many be disturbed and defiled, through the contagion of so bad an example.”

Ver. 16. Lest there be any fornicator] We must not imagine that the apostle here mentions Esau as an example of the crime of fornication; for nothing appears in the history to shew that Esau was more guilty of this sin than

any one else, who in those days had many wives; though polygamy is utterly inconsistent with the gospel dispensation. Esau is called a profane person, because, as a prophetic blessing went with the birth-right, there was a most profane contempt of it in the infamous bargain here referred to: and as an eagerness in the gratification of appetite would naturally imply a contempt of spiritual and divine blessings, sacrificed to such gratifications; it was properly expressed by profaneness. Instead of one morsel, the Greek may be more properly rendered one mess. Dr. Heylin renders it a single meal. The apostle keeps in view the point of falling from the grace of God; which if any man do, it may be no more in his power to retrieve it, than it was in Esau's to recover the blessing which he had despised.

Ver. 17. For ye know] And you know that afterwards, when he was desirous to inherit the benediction, he was judged unworthy of it; nor could he find any way to change the mind of Isaac, although he sought it earnestly, and with tears. Heylin.

Ver. 18. For ye are not come, &c.] What here follows is assigned as a reason to confirm the preceding advice; namely, that they should follow peace with all men, and continue in the grace of God, ver. 14, 15. The motive hereto is briefly this: “Because you are not come to Sinai, but to Sion. You must maintain peace with, and receive to your communion, not only your brother Jews, but also the uncircumcised believers; because you are not come, as your ancestors once came, to mount Sinai, where the law was given to none but the Jews; but you are come to mount Sion, to which all believers pertain.” When the apostle exhorted them not to fall from the grace or favour of God, ver. 15. he thereby represented the gospel, as the dispensation of the grace of God. He now sets himself to prove this, by observing, that the law spoke nothing but terror, ver. 18—21. whereas the gospel discovers abundant grace, particularly

21 'And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22 But ye are come unto ^o mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an ⁱ innumerable company of angels,

23 ^s To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are ^{*} written in heaven, and to ^b God the judge of all, and to the spirits

of just men made perfect;

24 And to Jesus ⁱ the mediator of the new [†] covenant, and to ^k the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

25 ⁱ See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For ^m if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven :

^d Gen. 28. 17. Judges, 6. 22. & 13. 22. Dan. 8. 17, 27. & 10. 7, 8, 11, 17. Mat. 17. 6. Rev. 1. 17. ^e Gal. 4. 26. Rev. 3. 12. & 10. 9, 23. & 21. 2, 10. Phil. 3. 20. Pl. 48. 1. ^f Deut. 35. 2. Pl. 68. 17. Dan. 7. 10. Rev. 5. 11. ^g Jer. 31. 9. Rev. 7. 4, 9. & 14. 1, 4. Luke, 10. 20. Phil. 4. 3. Rev. 13. 8. & 17. 8. If. 4. 3. Exod. 4. 22. Numb. 3. 40. ^h Gen. 18. 25. Pl. 50. 4, 6. 2 Theff. 1. 5. ⁱ Mat. 5. 12. Ch. 6. 10, 12. If. 57. 2. ^j Tim. 2. 5. Ch. 7. 22. & 9. 15. & 10. 4—14. ^k Exod. 24. 8. Ch. 9. 14. & 10. 22. & 13. 12. ^l Peter, 1. 2. with ch. 11. 4. ^m Gen. 4. 10. ⁿ Exod. 23. 21. Mat. 17. 5. If. 55. 3. ^o Ch. 2. 2, 3. & 3. 17. & 10. 28, 29.

a Mediator,—his atoning blood,—the happiness of heaven, and the eternal glories of the New Jerusalem: (ver. 22—24.) and every thing the apostle says concerning these two different states, will be found to answer one or other, and often both of his purposes; namely, to excite the Hebrews to follow peace with all men, and to continue in the grace of God. Instead of the *mount that might be touched*, Dr. Heylin reads very properly, *to a palpable mountain*: For the apostle does not mean that it was lawful or allowed that the Israelites should touch this mountain, while the law was giving; (for he observes this was forbidden, ver. 20.) but that it was a real, material, earthly mountain, which was in itself capable of being touched or felt; while mount Zion is a spiritual thing which cannot be touched.

Ver. 21. *And so terrible was the sight, &c.*] “The appearance was so dreadful that Moses himself, who was happy in such unparalleled degrees of the divine favour, and accustomed to converse with God in so intimate a manner, when urged by the people to act as their mediator in this awful transaction, said, though I consent to undertake the charge, I do nevertheless exceedingly fear and tremble.” This circumstance is not recorded in the Mosaic history; but most probably it was well known to the Hebrews by the means of tradition: for they had so great a veneration for the character and honour of Moses, that they would have been vehemently enraged with the apostle, if they had not themselves been conscious of the truth of the apostle’s assertion.

Ver. 22. *But ye are come unto mount Zion, &c.*] There seems to be throughout this whole period a reference to the manifestation which God made of himself upon mount Zion, as being milder than that upon mount Sinai, and the heavenly society with which Christians are incorporated, is considered as resembling the former, (that is, mount Zion,) in those circumstances in which it was more amiable than the latter. Zion was the city of God: in the temple which stood there, cherubims were the ornaments of the walls, both in the holy and most holy place, to signify the presence of those myriads of angels, who attended at the giving of the law, and are present in the true heavens. *There* (in the city of Zion) was a general assembly and congregation of the *priests*, who were substituted *instead of the*

first-born: there was God, as the supreme Judge of controversies, giving forth his oracles; the high-priest was the mediator between God and Israel; and the *blood of sprinkling* was daily used.

Ver. 23. *To the general assembly*] The word Πανηγυρις properly signifies a stated convention upon some joyful and festive occasion; particularly it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games: in which view it expresses a very elegant and lively opposition to the case of the Israelites; who were struck with a general terror, when they were convened before mount Sinai. The first-born are all such as inherit the birth-right; that is, all the faithful saints of God. The words, *of all*, are thought to have a peculiar emphasis here; implying that God will judge all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles. (See Rom. iii. 30.) whence the inference is easy, that we ought to *follow peace with all men*, and to receive to communion all such as God justifies. The *spirits of just men made perfect* means the souls of such as enjoy complete happiness with God in heaven, so far as may consist with the separate state.

Ver. 24. *To the blood of sprinkling,*] We who have joined ourselves to Christ, have engaged ourselves to adhere to the blood of Christ, offered by him, either as our High-priest in heaven, or as ratifying the covenant of which he is the Mediator—Blood, which though shed by wicked hands, yet has a quite different tendency from that of righteous Abel: for Abel’s blood cried unto God from the ground for vengeance, and the consequence was, that Cain was *hid from God’s face*; whereas the blood of Christ speaks goodness and favour, comfort and peace, and the enjoyment of God’s presence for ever.

Ver. 25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.*] That is, Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. Dr. Sykes paraphrases the verse well, thus: “Look to it, therefore, and see that you do not, as your fathers did, refuse to attend to him who hath now spoken to you [by this gracious dispensation]; for if every transgression received a just recompence of reward, and your fathers were so strictly punished, who refused to regard him that spake to them from mount Sinai, how much more may we expect to be punished, if we pay no regard to him who came down from heaven,—even the Son of God, who in these last days hath spoken to us from the Father.” See ch. ii. 2, 3. John, iii. 13.

Ver.

26 Whose voice * then shook the earth : but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

fieth the removing of those things that * are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

27 And this word, ° Yet once more, signi-

28 Wherefore we receiving † a kingdom which cannot be moved, † let us have grace,

* Exod. 19. 18. Hag. 2. 6, 7, 23. Ver. 19, 27. ° Pf. 102. 26, 27. Mat. 24. 35. 1 Pet. 3. 10. Mat. 16. 18. Ver. 28. Rev. 21. 1. † Or *may be shaken.* † If. 9. 7. Dan. 2. 44. & 7. 14. Luke, 1. 33. & 17. 20, 21. Mat. 16. 18. 1 Peter, 1. 4. & 2. 5, 9. Mat. 25. 34. † Or *let us bold fast.*

Ver. 26. Whose voice then shook the earth :] It is generally granted by the spiritual commentators, that the person who spake on earth, and he who spake from heaven, is the same great Messenger of the covenant ; in which view the argument of the apostle is taken from the different manner of speaking : his speaking on earth being accompanied with earthly signs and circumstances ; whereas his speaking from heaven means his coming down from heaven, appearing in the human nature, and declaring heavenly things, more glorious than the law. The speaking here mentioned, refers particularly to the alterations made in the constitution of religion, and to the new dispensation ; and must be considered not as introductory to, but consequent upon the coming of the Messiah.

Ver. 27. And this word, Yet once more, &c.] “ And it is evident that this expression, *Yet once more*, or, *For the last time*, not only signifies the removal and change of the things there said to be shaken,—(that is, of the ordinances of Moses,) as of things which were made and constituted only for a time ; but also strongly intimates, that he would introduce thereby a dispensation to be changed no more ; that the thing not to be shaken any more, might be set up and remain fixed on a perpetual basis ; even that eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace, which God hath established by Christ Jesus his Son.” See Exod. xix. 18. Hag. ii. 6, 7.

Ver. 28, 29. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom, &c.] “ As therefore we have received such an unshaken kingdom, which shall never be removed to make way for any different establishment, and which gives to the faithful the assurance of a reign in eternal glory ; Let us see to it ; that we have grace, whereby we may serve God, from whom we receive it, in an acceptable manner.—As that grace is so freely offered to us in the gospel, let us not be so wanting to ourselves as to fall short of it : and while we feel our hearts inspired with all that gratitude and confidence which suit the genius of so merciful a dispensation, let them be attempered with a becoming mixture of reverence and pious fear ; that we may not, by an unworthy abuse of the gospel, deprive ourselves of its invaluable blessings, and sin beyond all possibility of further remedy : For though our God manifests himself in the beams of such mild majesty, he is still possessed of that tremendous power, which was so awfully displayed at mount Sinai, and will break forth as a consuming fire against all those who presumptuously violate his laws, and despise his gospel.” See ch. iv. 16. Deut. iv. 23, 24. Instead of *let us have grace*, Heylin, Sykes, &c. read, *let us give thanks*. Compare 2 Tim. i. 3.

*Inferences.—*How great is our encouragement to faith and patience ! We have a cloud of eminent examples in the Old Testament saints, and the brightest of all in our suffering Lord and Saviour, to animate our running the Christian race through all difficulties till it be completed. In order hereunto, let us cast off every thing that would incumber us, and every sin which we are most liable to, and look to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, for all assistances, victory, and triumph, that we may be conformable to him, who, for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now exalted to his throne. Our sufferings have not yet been unto death, as they might have been, and were in many of the ancient worthies, and in our blessed Lord himself ; and whatever they be, if we continue the children of God, they shall be all wisely and graciously over-ruled by our heavenly Father, for our amendment in this world. For what son is there whom the Father chastens not for his faults ? But O how difficult is it to steer right between despising the chastenings of the Lord, and fainting under them ! And with how much greater reverence and submission should we receive the corrections of the Father of our spirits, than can be due from children to their fathers of the flesh ! Though such chastenings are in their own nature grievous, they are nevertheless profitable, to make us partakers of his holiness, and to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness, for living to him here, and with him hereafter. How deeply concerned therefore ought we to be, that no afflictions may ever turn us aside from the way of God’s testimonies, or make us halt in our holy profession ; but that we may advance forward with vigour in the straight paths of truth and duty, and may be exemplary, and encouraging to others, under their fears, despondencies, and dangers ! And what amiable companions are peace and holiness ! These should be unitedly pursued : but if we cannot obtain peace, upon good terms with men, we should remember that holiness is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision and enjoyment of God. And how dreadful is it to fall short of his grace under the gospel dispensation ! All principles and practices which lead to apostacy, will one way or other be a root of bitterness, and endanger infection to the church of Christ, whenever they break out. How should we dread the first beginnings of apostacy, lest at length it should run into all uncleanness, and profane contempt of every thing that is sacred, like Esau’s despising and selling his birth-right, which could never be recovered ! How terrible is the voice of the law, as delivered at mount Sinai, and as roaring in the consciences of awakened sinners ! It spreads blackness and darkness through their souls ; burns like a tormenting fire within them ; overwhelms them like a horrible tempest ; summons them, as with the sound

' whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear :

29 For ' our God *is* a consuming fire.

Phil. 4. 13. Zach. 10. 12. & 12. 10. 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Titus, 2. 11—14. Pf. 89. 7. & 96. 4—9. Exod. 24. 17. Deut. 4. 24. & 9. 3. Pf. 50. 3. 2 Thess. 1. 8. Exod. 19. 18. Numb. 11. 1. & 16. 35. Deut. 32. 22. Pf. 97. 3. Il. 66. 15. Dan. 7. 9. Ch. 10. 27.

found of a trumpet, to appear at God's awful bar for judgment; and makes them dread to hear of any thing more of its rigorous terrors, which they know not how to bear. Yea, the holiest of men, like *Moses* himself, must tremble, when they think of God's infinite purity and unyielding justice, as considered only according to the tremendous revelation of them in his righteous law. But how encouraging, comforting, and glorious, are the discoveries and blessings of gospel grace! Here deliverance from the law and all its terrors, and the richest privileges, are set before condemned sinners; and believers in Jesus have free admission to all heavenly blessings with the New Testament church: for the living God dwells after a more spiritual and excellent manner in them, than ever he did in the temple on mount *Sion*, and in the beloved city of *Jerusalem*. They have delightful and beneficial communion by faith and love with innumerable myriads of holy angels; and with the spirits of departed saints, which are made perfect in happiness and holiness; yea, with the whole church triumphant in glory: and they have humble boldness of access to God, the Judge of the whole world, as they come by faith to him through the Mediator of the new covenant, under the sprinklings of his Blood, which speaks better things than the blood even of *Abel's* sacrifice. How should we rejoice and bless God for the gospel dispensation, which brings us to our only remedy against the terrors of the law, and to a happy communion with God and his Christ, angels, and saints! This is a constitution of a spiritual and heavenly nature, and is revealed and confirmed immediately from heaven by our blessed Lord, whose voice shook the earth in delivering the law at mount *Sinai*, and who made a most excellent revolution, which may be called his shaking heaven as well as earth, in setting aside the *Mosaic* dispensation, and introducing that of the gospel state in its stead. How firmly is this glorious dispensation of light and grace established, to continue without any change to the consummation of all things! It consists of such a spiritual church state, with respect to its worship and ordinances, privileges and blessings, as cannot be shaken. O with what spirituality and solemnity should we worship God according to this heavenly establishment! Though he is a reconciled God and Father in Christ to all sincere believers, he is a devouring fire to all neglecters and abusers of his grace, and particularly to all hypocrites, and all apostates, who finally fall from grace. How highly therefore does it concern us to receive, and hold fast the gospel of the kingdom with faith and love; and to have the genuine power of grace in our own souls; whereby we may be enabled to serve God acceptably, through Christ, with all devotional reverence of his sacred Majesty, and filial fear of offending him!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Having proposed to them such bright examples, the apostle urges the Hebrews,

1. To imitate their faith, patience, and perseverance.

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, who, having finished the glorious course themselves, are now looking on our conduct, let us, animated by their examples, and roused to an imitation of their excellencies, lay aside every weight that would retard our speed, all inordinate attachment to earth and earthly things, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, that which from our circumstances, station in life, connections, and constitution, is ever soliciting our consent, and would ensnare our souls; particularly the great and capital sins, unbelief, pride, and lust, under whatever specious pretences they may appear; and let us run with patience, not discouraged at difficulties, nor fainting under temptation, but eager to finish the race that is set before us, and to win the glorious prize. Note; (1.) We have a race before us; the course is circumscribed by our mortal days; the word of God marks out our path; saints and angels are spectators; death is the goal, and glory the reward of fidelity. What services then can we refuse? What sufferings shall dismay us? (2.) Faith and patience are the mighty graces which can enable us to hold on, and to hold out, till we finish our course with joy.

2. The only way that in faith and patience we can persevere, is here described—Looking unto Jesus (*ἀποβλέψας*), turning away our eyes from sin, the world, and every ensnaring object which would seduce our affections, and keeping him singly in our view, who is the author, and alone can be the finisher of our faith, by grace and strength derived from him, enabling us to follow his perfect pattern; who for the joy that was set before him, that God's perfections might be glorified, full satisfaction made to Divine justice, his faithful saints' eternal salvation secured, and himself, as Mediator, be crowned with glory and honour, endured the cross, with all its horrors, exercising the most astonishing patience and unshaken fortitude, despising the shame of that ignominious tree, and is now, in consequence thereof, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, exalted to the highest dignity and majesty in the heavens. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, compare your sufferings with his, the infinite disproportion between your persons and him; the invincible patience and undisturbed composure with which he bore every insult and torment; reflect upon this often and deeply; lest ye be weary and faint in your minds; and let the eye of faith, fixed on him, draw out of his fulness the needful supplies of strength to follow his blessed footsteps. Note; (1.) When we properly consider what the Son of God for our sakes freely endured, we shall be ashamed to complain of the comparatively trivial cross which we sustain, and boldly set our faces as a flint against all sufferings and reproaches, which for his sake we may be called to bear. (2.) Great and long-continued trials are apt to weary out our feeble minds, so that we are ready to sink under them: but Jesus is before us; he saith, Look unto me; and that reviving sight uncloses the dying eyes, re-animates

CHAP. XIII.

Divers admonitions, as to charity, to honest life, to avoid covetousness, to regard God's preachers, to take heed of strange doctrines, to confess Christ, to give alms, to obey governors, and to pray for the apostle. The conclusion.

[Anno Domini 63.]

LET ^a brotherly love continue.
^b Be not forgetful to entertain

^a Eph. 4. 3. 1 Thess. 4. 9. Rom. 12. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 22. & 3. 8. & 2. 17. & 4. 8. 2 Peter, 1. 7. ^b Rom. 12. 12. Lev. 19. 34. 1 Peter, 4. 9. Deut. 10. 19. 11. 58. 7. Mat. 25. 35. Luke, 14. 13. Titus, 1. 8. 1 Tim. 3. 2. & 5. 10. ^c Gen. 18. 3. & 19. 2. ^d Mat. 25. 36. Rom. 12. 15. Neh. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 12. 16. Col. 4. 18. Ch. 6. 10. & 10. 34. 1 Peter, 3. 8. Gal. 6. 1, 2. ^e Gen. 2. 18-24. 1 Cor. vii. 1 Tim. 2. 15. & 2. 2, 4. ^f 1 Cor. 6. 9. Gal. 5. 19, 21. Eph. 5. 5. Col. 3. 5, 6. Ch. 12. 16. Rev. 22. 15. & 21. 8. Mal. 3. 5.

strangers: for thereby ^c some have entertained angels unawares.

3 ^d Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 ^e Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: ^f but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

animates the dejected spirit, rouses the fainting heart, and, inspired with renewed vigour, we run our heavenly race, made more than conquerors through his love.

2dly, In support of what he had said before, the apostle, 1. Suggests the most engaging arguments to persevere:

[1.] God had hitherto preserved them in life. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin*; and as he had not called them to the severest conflicts, it would be shameful indeed if they sunk under lesser trials. *Note*; (1.) Our warfare lies against sin, the deadly foe, who, if not vanquished, will destroy us body and soul for ever. We need, be resolute, therefore, when our all is at stake. (2.) We are to acknowledge with thankfulness the kindness of our adored Lord, who proportions our trials to our strength.

[2.] The sufferings they had endured were the kind chastisements of a father's rod, however evil the instruments might be who were the immediate authors of them. *And ye have forgotten, or Have ye forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children? My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord*; neither, on the one hand, slighting the affliction, unsuitably affected thereby, or stubborn under the rod; nor, on the other, faint when thou wert rebuked of him, sinking under unbelief, impatient under the trial, or overwhelmed with despair. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth for their good, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth into the bosom of his love. If ye endure chastening, far from counting it a token of wrath, God herein dealeth with you as with sons, with the kindest intention of your correction and amendment: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* There is no child of God but needs the gracious scourge; and our heavenly Father will not, like a foolishly fond parent, spare the needful stroke: *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all the true members of his family are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons: to be neglected, and not counted worth correction, would prove you to be an obstinate, rebellious people, whom God abandons to their own ways. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, were in duty bound to submit to their paternal discipline, and to love them the more for their care in rebuking the evil that they discovered in us: shall we not much rather then be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, from whose immediate hand our immortal souls are derived; meekly submitting to him, whose authority over us is so much greater; and this, that we may live in a state of holy communion with him, and subjection to him, till*

he shall have purged out all our evil, and prepared us for a place in his better house above. *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure*; and much passion, self-will, and weakness, mingled with their corrections; but he, who is infinitely wise as well as boundless in love, scourges us for our profit, that, as the blessed issue of the afflictions which he is pleased to lay upon us, *we might be partakers of his holiness, cleansed from the dross of corrupt affections, and renewed after his blessed image. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, and the flesh cannot but groan under the scourge: nevertheless, while faith supports us comfortably under the trial, we afterwards continually see cause to bless God for our suffering; since afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby*; and we can say, by happy experience, it is good for me that I have been afflicted. *Note*; (1.) God's corrections must not be made light of on the one hand, nor should we on the other despair on account of them; but, humbling our souls under the mighty hand of the Lord, should patiently wait, in confidence that he will lift us up. (2.) God's chastisements are all sent out of pure love to his children; and therefore should be received with dutiful submission and lowly resignation. (3.) If we are bound to reverence our earthly parents, and submit to their often arbitrary and self-willed corrections, how much more should the chastisements of our heavenly Father be embraced with thankfulness, to whom we owe so much higher reverence; who never strikes without cause, and so wisely and graciously orders his afflictive dispensations in time, manner, and measure, as is exactly suited to our wants, and tends to our profiting. (4.) Far from judging of God's anger by the severity and length of our trials, we should rather from thence conclude that his love is great toward us. He visits that he may purge us thoroughly from our dross; and faith can make us rejoice even in the fires, under the confidence that peaceable fruits of righteousness will be produced out of those trials which to flesh and blood are most grievous.

2. He exhorts them not to faint or be disheartened, but to be vigorous in their Christian course. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*; cast away every desponding fear, and press with eagerness to the goal, encouraging each other nobly to persevere in the face of every difficulty and danger, depending on Almighty Grace. *And make straight paths for your feet, labouring to*

remove

5 ^e *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: ^h for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

^f Col. 3. 5. Mat. 6. 25, 24. Exod. 23. 8. Deut. 19. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 6, 8. Phil. 4. 11, 12. 2 Cor. 5. 11. ^h Deut. 31. 8. Joh. 1. 5. Gen. 28. 15. 1 Sam. 12. 22. 1 Chron. 28. 20. 1f. 41. 10—17. & 43. 2. & 46. 4. Pl. 37. 25, 28. Prov. 10. 3, 16, 17. & 5. 16.

remove every obstacle at which yourselves or your brethren might stumble, *lest that which is lame be turned out of the way of truth and righteousness, and the weak offended or perverted from the paths of godliness; but let it rather be healed, the feeble-minded supported, the disheartened encouraged, the weak confirmed, the fallen lifted up and restored again.* *Note*; We should labour to be assisting to each other in our heavenly way, and attentive to the good of our brethren's souls, as to our own.

3. He particularly directs them what to pursue. *Follow peace with all men, desiring earnestly to maintain it in every relation and with all persons, as far as is consistent with a good conscience; and holiness in heart and life and all manner of conversation, without which no man shall see the Lord, or be admitted to the beatific vision in glory everlasting.* *Note*; Peace and holiness are essential to our hopes as Christians; we deceive ourselves if we think we can ever be saved, whilst enslaved by passion and vile affections.

4. He gives them a solemn caution against apostacy, enforced by Esau's fearful example. *Looking diligently, watching over each other with holy jealousy, lest any man fail of the grace of God, and apostatize from the faith; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled, seduced by their heresies, or perverted by their ill examples: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right, to be the progenitor of the great Messiah, despising the sacred as well as civil privileges which were annexed thereto; and his punishment was suited to his crime, for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, and prevailed upon his father to retract what he had given to Jacob, he was rejected by him, for he found no place of repentance, nor would Isaac change his mind or reverse his word, though he sought it carefully with tears.* *Note*; (1.) Apostates from the truth are the most dangerous enemies, and bitter opposers. (2.) Many, for the gratification of a bestial appetite, have, like Esau, renounced their sacred birth-right, and too late will they rue their sin and folly.

3dly, To guard the Hebrews particularly from revolting back to Judaism, he sets before them the excellence of the gospel church and worship above the Judaical.

1. He reminds them of that dispensation of terror and bondage from which they had been delivered. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, which was a palpable earthly substance, and not like the spiritual Zion, and that burned with fire, when God in terrible pomp descended thereon; nor unto blackness and darkness, which covered that typical dispensation; and tempest, emblematical of the storms of wrath which hang over the heads of the transgressors; and the sound of a trumpet, which with louder and still louder blasts spread terrible dismay throughout the hosts of Israel; and the voice of words, in the most awful manner articulately pronouncing the ten commandments; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; so terrified were*

they at it, and begged that Moses might be their mediator, and that through him they might receive the revelation of the divine will: (*for they could not endure that which was commanded, so unable did they think themselves to answer the demands of these laws, and dreaded their awful sanction; particularly that fearful edict, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, during the time that the Divine Presence is there manifested, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake.*) so dark and terrible was that dispensation under which they had been held; and this should with hearty eagerness engage them to receive and hold fast that milder, brighter, spiritual dispensation of gospel grace, when God, without one terror spread around him, invited poor sinners, through his dear Son, to approach his throne and live. This more glorious state the apostle,

2. Describes. *But ye are come unto mount Zion, the spiritual gospel church, where God, well pleased, takes up his blest abode, and accepts the worship and service there performed; and unto the city of the living God, built on Christ the foundation, and blest with the most transcendent privileges; the heavenly Jerusalem, where all the inhabitants are spiritualized in temper and affections, and made meet for their eternal mansions in glory; and to an innumerable company of angels, your fellow-servants, who minister unto the heirs of salvation; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, the noble army of saints triumphant in glory; and to God the Judge of all; who on the great day shall judge the world by him to whom all judgment is committed, and to whom you are now reconciled in the Son of his love; and to the spirits of just men made perfect, now entered into their eternal rest, with whom you maintain communion, as influenced by the same Spirit, justified by the same Blood, members of the same body, pursuing the same end, and longing to join their services in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, through whom all these invaluable privileges and blessings are derived down to us; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel: his blood cried for vengeance, but the Blood which Jesus shed, sprinkled by faith upon our consciences, speaks peace and blessedness: as it infinitely exceeds in excellence that of Abel's sacrifice, much more shall it obtain acceptance and favour with God for all those, who, sprinkled therewith, boldly appear in the presence of the Most High and Most Holy.*

3. From these considerations he proceeds to exhort them to take heed to themselves. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh in the gospel: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, even Moses who delivered the sacred oracles of the law to the people, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, that Lord of life and glory who came down from heaven, and is returned thither again, and by the inspiration of his Spirit,*

6 So that we may boldly say, ¹ The Lord is my helper, ² and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which * have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, con-

¹ Pl. 27. 1-3. & 56. 4, 11. & 118. 6, 8. *are the guides.*

² Ver. 17, 24. 1 Th. 5. 12. Ch. 6. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 1. Song, 1. 8.

* Or

Spirit, which in such an astonishing manner he hath sent from thence, speaks now in his gospel word: *whose voice then shook the earth, when Sinai trembled at his presence: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven, the Jewish church, with all their civil and ecclesiastical polity. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, not for a perpetuity, but for a while only, as was the case of the Jewish tabernacle and economy; that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, and that the gospel church, worship, and privileges, may endure unalterable unto the end of time. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, and by faith admitted to a participation of the privileges of that kingdom of gospel grace, which will issue shortly to the faithful in a kingdom of glory, let us remember, esteem, and value our distinguished mercies, and have grace to hold fast the doctrine of truth, and beg a more abundant measure of the Spirit, whereby we may serve God acceptably, through Jesus Christ, with reverence and godly fear, under a sense of our own unworthiness. For our God is a consuming fire, and will execute fearful vengeance on every apostate from the faith and practice of the gospel. Note; (1.) Constant worship and waiting upon God, is the appointed way wherein he hath promised to bestow on us the grace which can enable us to serve him acceptably. (2.) The fire of eternal vengeance will assuredly light down upon the apostate and impenitent soul.*

C H A P. XIII.

THIS chapter begins with an exhortation to the Hebrews to exercise love to the brethren, hospitality to strangers, and compassion to the imprisoned and afflicted: charity likewise is recommended, together with disinterestedness, and a careful imitation of their teachers, whose trial was ended, and who had shewn great fortitude in suffering for their faith, ver. 1-8.

Next, the Hebrews were desired to beware of being tossed about with those discordant doctrines, disagreeing with each other, and the great standard of truth in the divine revelation; especially those pernicious doctrines concerning the efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices to procure the pardon of sin, which the Judaizing teachers inculcated with great earnestness. Their giving heed to these errors the apostle was anxious to prevent, because, if they trusted to the Levitical atonements for pardon, they would lose the benefit of the sacrifice of Christ. This, the apostle told them, their own law taught them figuratively, by forbidding the priests and people to eat of those sacrifices, whose blood was carried into the holy places to make atonement. And being unwilling to quit the subject, he added, that because the carcases of the sin-offerings were ordered to be burnt without the camp as things unclean, ver. 11.—so Jesus, who sanctified the people with his own blood, suf-

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fered as a malefactor or unclean person without the gates of Jerusalem, ver. 12.—These particulars the apostle mentioned, to shew that all the Levitical sin-offerings were types of Christ, whose example in suffering ignominy and punishment for men, he desired the Hebrews to imitate from gratitude, by willingly suffering reproach and persecution for his sake, ver. 13.—And this they might do the more easily, as they knew they had no continuing city here, but were seeking one in the life to come, ver. 14.—In the mean time, he exhorted them to worship God, not in the Jewish but in the Christian manner, by offering, through Christ, the sacrifice of praise to God continually, ver. 15.—and to be zealous in doing good works, because worship and praise accompanied with such works as proceed from the operation of divine grace, are sacrifices far more pleasing to God, than the sacrifices of beasts, ver. 16.

Again, because the Hebrews, through the prejudices of their education, were in danger of not hearkening to their teachers when they inculcated the true doctrines of the gospel, he ordered them to be obedient to their spiritual guides, and to esteem them highly as persons who watched for their souls, ver. 17.—and requested them to pray for him, because he assured them, that he had maintained a good conscience in all things he had written to them, ver. 18.—Then he gave them his apostolical benediction in a most elegant form, ver. 20, 21.—and besought them to take in good part the instruction contained in this letter, which he acknowledged was a short one, considering the variety and importance of the subjects that he had handled in it, ver. 22.

Having thus finished his exhortations, the apostle informed the Hebrews that he had sent away Timothy on some important business; but promised, if he returned in time, to bring him with him when he visited them, ver. 23.—In the mean while, he desired them to present his salutation to all the rulers of their church; meaning, I suppose, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; also in his name to salute all the brethren and saints; and sent them the salutation of the brethren in Italy, ver. 24.—Then he concluded, with giving them his apostolical benediction in a more short form, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*] By this exhortation the apostle plainly implies, that they did already love their Christian brethren; accordingly, he commended them before, (ch. vi. 10.) for their ministering to the saints: consistently with this, he exhorted them (ch. xii. 14.) to follow peace with all men, which implies, that they were defective as to this duty of charity towards the Gentile Christians. There is a difference between *φιλανθρωπία*, brotherly love, and *ἀγάπη*, charity, or love in the general; according to what St. Peter lays, 2 Ep. i. 7.—*add to brotherly love, charity.* Brotherly love signifies men's loving those whom they esteem to be their brethren, answerably to that relation; but the word *ἀγάπη* expresses the love

5 B

which

sidering the end of *their* conversation :

8 ^l Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

9 ^m Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have

been occupied therein.

10 ^o We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 ^p For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

^l Phil. 1. 27. & 3. 7—11. 1 Cor. 1. 24, 30. & 2. 2. & 3. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Gal. 1. 7. Eph. 4. 5. Rev. 1. 5, 8. ^m Jer. 23. 8. Mat. 24. 4, 24. Rom. 16. 17. Col. 2. 4, 8, 20. 2 Thess. 2. 2. 1 John, 4. 1. Eph. 4. 14. & 5. 6. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. & 6. 3—5, 20. 2 Tim. 2. 16. & 3. 13. Jude, 3. Acts, 20. 30. ^o John, 6. 27. Acts, 20. 24, 32. Titus, 2. 11, 12. Rom. 14. 17. 1 Cor. 6. 13. & 8. 8. Col. 2. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 12. & 2. 1, 3, 14. & 3. 14. Ch. 12. 28. & 9. 9. ^p 1 Cor. 9. 13. & 10. 18. Col. 2. 17. Eph. 5. 2. 1 John, 2. 2. Col. 3. 11. Gal. 3. 26, 27. & 5. 4. Mat. 2. 11, 12. Exod. 29. 14. Lev. 4. 12, 21. & 6. 30. & 9. 11. & 16, 27. Numb. 19. 3.

which men bear to such also as they do not own to be their brethren, even those who are not of the Christian religion,—and even to enemies. Dr. Heylin reads, *Let brotherly love ever remain*; and he observes, that in the progress of religion there is a vicissitude of states, of which the apostle had just before treated: but whatever our inferior state be, *brotherly love* is an invariable duty.

Ver. 2. *Be not forgetful*, &c.] The apostle seems to refer to the reception given to angels by Abraham and Lot. See Gen. xviii. and xix.

Ver. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all*,] *Let marriage be held in esteem by all*: thus many critics would render this clause; as the context, in their judgment, shews that the passage is exhortatory. The connection, however, of the latter clause introduced by the particle *but*, is thought by others to vindicate our version.

Ver. 5. *Be content with such things as ye have*:] The reason here given why there should be no discontent at the various cross accidents of life is, *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*; which was an assurance given to Joshua. See Deut. xxxi. 8. Josh. i. 5. The apostle had just before proved, that the kingdom set up by Christ was *not to be shaken*; therefore, in the language spoken to Joshua, it was true that *God would never leave it, nor forsake it*, till all was fulfilled. The consequence of which is, that his providence extends to every member of his kingdom; that every one may depend upon it; and every one may say with the Psalmist, *The Lord is my helper*. And as to the particular topic for contentedness in the present station, this is founded on the nature of God, and the government of the world; but above all, on the merit and intercession of Christ, and his mediatorial reign over the universe, for the church which is his body: and the words spoken to Joshua are applicable to all the faithful children of God, That we ought to cast all our care upon him, who is sufficient to guard us from all harm; or, if we do suffer here, can fully recompense us hereafter. The application of a particular promise to such general purposes, opens a noble hint for the improvement of the Old Testament, upon this great and solid principle, That God, who is no respecter of persons, intends that expressions of his favour to this or that eminently good man, should be used for the encouragement of all others of the like character.

Ver. 7. *Remember them which have the rule*] *Who have had the rule*. Bishop Lloyd thinks that this may refer to James the apostle, and to James commonly called the first bishop of Jerusalem, both of whom had been put to death

there before this epistle was written. Dr. Heylin renders this and the next verse as follows: *Remember those who have been your spiritual guides, and preached to you the word of God; consider well how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith: Jesus Christ is still the same; what he was yesterday, he is to-day, and shall be through all ages.* “Several of the persons here referred to (says he,) died martyrs, as may be seen in Theodoret upon the place. What Jesus Christ had been to them in the time past, supporting them in their trials, the same he would be to the faithful Hebrews in the time then present; and the same he will be to those who serve him, through all ages, with an undiminished energy.”

Ver. 9, 10. *Be not carried about*, &c.] *Be not seduced or led away*. Heylin. The connection of this verse is thus: “Remember the faithful pastors you have had, the end and object of that faith which they have taught,—the eternal and immutable power of Jesus Christ; and, in this view, see to it that you be not led away by such doctrines relating to Christianity as are different from what your deceased pastors taught you, and are new and strange among Christians; as “there is no virtue in meats offered on the Jewish altar:” for it is better that the heart should be established in the grace of the gospel, than in a regard to such meats; inasmuch as they who have paid a regard to them, have not thereby received any advantage (see Acts, xv. 13, &c.). Nor let them boast (ver. 10.) of their having an altar at Jerusalem, whereof no Gentile has a right to partake: for we have, what is infinitely better than this,—an altar of which the Jewish priests who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat; that is, their Jewish worship gives them “no interest in the sacrifice of Christ.”

Ver. 11, 12. *For the bodies of these beasts*, &c.] The connection of these words with the foregoing seems to be this: The thing to be proved, ver. 10. is, that the Jewish priests have no right by the law to partake of the Christian altar. The reason of which is, because the sacrifice offered upon the Christian altar of the cross, was offered without the gates of Jerusalem; which shews that it was of the same nature with the old propitiatory sacrifices, whose bodies were ordered to be burned without the camp; of which therefore it was unlawful and impossible for the Jewish priests to partake: so that the law which forbade them to eat of propitiatory sacrifices, denied them a right to partake of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. From all which it is to be inferred, that they should forsake the law,

12 ⁹ Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 ¹ Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 ⁴ For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

15 ¹ By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the

fruit of *our* lips * giving thanks to his name.

16 ⁴ But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 ⁴ Obey them that have † the rule over you, and submit yourselves: ⁷ for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

⁹ John, 19. 17, 18. Mark, 15. 20, 22. ¹ Song, 4. 8. & 3. 11. Ch. 11. 26. & 12. 2, 3. Phil. 2. 17. Acts, 7. 58. 1 Peter, 4. 14. ⁴ Deut. 12. 9. Micah, 2. 10. Phil. 3. 20. & 1. 23. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. & 5. 1-8. Ch. 4. 9. & 11. 10, 16. & 12. 22. ¹ 1 Peter, 2. 5. & 4. 11. Eph. 5. 20. 1 Thess. 5. 18. Lev. 7. 12. 2 Chron. 29. 31. & 33. 16. Pl. 34. 1, 2. & 50. 14, 23. & 51. 19. & 69. 30. & 107. 22. & 116. 17. & 66. 13-15. & cxiv. Hosea, 14. 2. Pl. cxxxvi. ⁴ Gr. *confessing*. ⁷ Rom. 12. 13. 2 Cor. 9. 12. Ch. 6. 10. Mat. 25. 40. Phil. 4. 18. ¹ See ver. 7. 1 Thess. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Pet. 5. 5. † *Of guide*. ⁷ Ezek. 3. 18, 19. & 33. 2, 7, 8. Acts, 20. 24, 26. 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. & 9. 16. 1 Pet. 4. 10. & 5. 2, 3. Titus, 1. 7. Phil. 2. 29. 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20. Il. 49. 4, 6.

law, and become Christians, and have their hearts established in grace, not in meats. The priests who served the tabernacle, were allowed to partake of some sacrifices which were offered within the tabernacle; (Lev. vi. 26.) but they had no right to partake of those sacrifices which were propitiatory, as appears from the order given relating to the service of the great day of propitiation, to which the apostle here undoubtedly refers;—*The bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.* Lev. xvi. 27. As therefore the priests had no right, according to the law, to partake of expiatory sacrifices, the law could not give them any right to partake of Christ's sacrifice, which is of the same expiatory kind figured and represented by them, as appears from his suffering without the gates of Jerusalem, in conformity to their being burnt without the camp. The apostle speaks of these things in the language of Moses, in whose days there was no temple built for the Jewish worship. He describes the people as living in a camp in the wilderness, only because he had respect to the words of Moses just quoted, which he recites almost *verbatim*. As, during the time of the tabernacle in the wilderness, the bodies of these sacrifices were to be burnt without the camp; so when the temple was built at Jerusalem, the bodies of those sin-offerings were burnt without the gates of Jerusalem; for which reason Jesus was to suffer, as he actually did, without the gate of the same city. Luke, xxiii. 33.

Ver. 13. Let us go forth therefore] This practical conclusion is drawn from the words immediately preceding the apostle's argument, and may be thus expressed: "Since, as I said, Jesus suffered without the gate of Jerusalem as a propitiatory sacrifice to atone for the sins of all mankind, and to consecrate them as a peculiar people unto God, let us go forth out of Jerusalem to him, and not think ourselves any longer obliged to observe the ceremonies and worship of the Jewish temple of Jerusalem; but let us adhere to Christ alone, and patiently bear the reproach of trusting in a crucified Saviour, as he bore the reproach of crucifixion." See chap. xi. 26. and the next note.

Ver. 14. For here we have no continuing city,] When the

apostle said, *Let us go forth unto him without the camp,* he speaks as if we were in our wilderness state, travelling toward the place of our rest. In the wilderness the Jews were obliged to dwell in tents, and had no fixed place of abode; *we* who believe in Christ, are but strangers here, travelling to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Ver. 15. By him therefore, &c.] "Since Jesus therefore hath suffered that he might redeem us with his blood, let us apply ourselves to God the Father, through him as the Mediator, and continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God through his mediation,—not the Jewish sacrifices of the fruits of the earth, of the flocks and herds, but the fruit of our lips; giving thanks to his name. Besides this sacrifice of praise, let us also offer the sacrifice of good works, &c. ver. 16." As the apostle was now writing to the Jews, he chose to speak of Christian duties and privileges in Jewish language, in order to convince them, that Christianity has all the advantages of which the Jewish church used to boast. As they had an altar, so have we; as they had an high-priest, through whose hands their sacrifices became acceptable to God, (which they would not have been, if they had been offered to God immediately by their own hands;) so we also have a great High-priest, who, as the Mediator between God and man, offers up our sacrifices of prayer and praise to God; who accepts these our sacrifices at Christ's hand, though he would not accept them, if we should offer them up immediately to him without a Mediator. The apostle here also teaches us the general form and method of Christian worship, which is, to offer up our prayers to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Mediator;—as the apostle says we must do continually, and as the precepts and examples recorded in the New Testament universally teach us. See on Hosea xiv. 2.

Ver. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you,] *Obey your spiritual guides, and submit to them; that as they are vigilant over your souls, for which they are accountable, they may discharge their office with alacrity, and not with dependence, which would be to your prejudice.* When a minister, zealous for those under his care, is discouraged by their apparent non-proficiency, that damps his spirits, and abates the vigour with which he would exert himself upon more probable hopes of success. See ver. 7. From the present verse, Hallett observes, we may form this general rule,

18 ^a Pray for us: for we trust ^a we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 ^b But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now ^c the God of peace, that ^d brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, ^e that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting ^{*} covenant,

21 ^f Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, [†] working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, [‡] to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And [§] I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: [¶] for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

^a Rom. 15. 30. Eph. 6. 19, 20. Col. 4. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 25. 2 Thes. 3. 1. ^b Acts, 23. 1. & 24. 16. 2 Cor. 7. 12. & 2. 4. ^c Philom. 22. Phil. 1. 19, 20. & 2. 24. Rom. 15. 30, 31. & 1. 12. ^d Rom. 15. 33. & 16. 20. 1 Cor. 14. 33. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 4. 9. 1 Thes. 5. 23. 2 Thes. 3. 16. ^e Acts, 1. 24, 32. & 3. 13, 26. & 4. 10. & 5. 30. & 10. 40. & 13. 30. & 17. 31. Rom. 1. 4. & 4. 24, 25. & 8. 11. 1 Cor. 6. 14. & 15. 15. 2 Cor. 4. 14. Gal. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 20. Col. 2. 12. 1 Thes. 1. 10. Ch. 10. 29. & 9. 12. 1 Pet. 1. 21. Zech. 9. 11. ^f If. 40. 11. & 49. 9. Ezek. 34. 23. & 37. 24. John, 10. 11, 14. 1 Pet. 2. 25. & 5. 4. [†] Or testament. [‡] 2 Cor. 3. 5. Phil. 2. 13. 1 Thes. 5. 23. 1 Pet. 5. 10. [¶] See Rev. 1. 6. Rom. 16. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Pl. 72. 18, 19. & 115. 1. [§] Ch. 2. 1. & 3. 1. & 4. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 20. & 6. 1. & 10. 1. Pl. 78. 1. [¶] 1 Pet. 5. 12. Gal. 6. 11. 2 Thes. 3. 17.

sued to all ages; namely, that where pastors, in all respects, behave themselves as Christians; where they are qualified with sufficient gifts, and faithfully perform the duties of their pastoral office; where they do not *lord it over God's heritage*, but are examples of all holiness and virtue to the flock, and heartily labour to promote the salvation of their people, under a lively apprehension that they must hereafter give a strict account of their management to the great Shepherd, who will either reward or punish them, according as they promote or hinder the salvation of those souls for whom he died:—where pastors act in this manner, the people are bound to *obey them*; that is, to hearken to their good advice, to submit to their just reproofs, as to men who, like parents, have a right to exhort and reprove them: and no one who at all considers things, can think it any manner of evil or hardship to submit to pastors of such a character, by attending to their good and friendly admonitions, and earnestly seeking their own salvation through Jesus Christ.

Ver. 18. For we trust we have a good conscience,] For we are confident that we have a good conscience, determined in all things to behave honourably. It is reasonable to think that the apostle particularly meant, that he took care to act up to the rules of the apostolical office which he had received, labouring to promote the salvation both of Jews and Gentiles; wherefore the Hebrews should not disregard him, upon the account of his labouring to convert the Gentiles through grace, as some of the Jews were apt to do; for he could not honestly discharge his office without this: they therefore should pray to God to give him good success.

Ver. 19. But I beseech you the rather to do this] that is, to pray for me: From what the apostle says in these two verses, it is evident that the Hebrews knew who was the author of this Epistle; and that his design in not setting his name, could not be to conceal himself from them: what his design herein was, we cannot pretend to assert. He would have them pray that success might attend his ministry where he now was, that he might sooner be at leisure to come to them. The case was probably the same as he describes, Rom. xv. 20—24.

Ver. 20. Now the God of peace, &c.] The Gentile world is commonly described as at enmity with God and his

kingdom; as alienated from him, and in a state of rebellion against him; and God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and by Christ offering to them the terms of reconciliation. Hence he is styled *the God of peace*, Rom. xv. 33. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Philip. iv. 9. The Jews too, coming to Christ, and being justified by faith, were reconciled in God to all mankind: therefore he is also called *the God of peace*. The next clause may be rendered, *That Shepherd of the sheep, great by the blood of the everlasting covenant.*

Ver. 21. Make you perfect] May the God of peace suit you to; (καταρτίσαι,) make you ready to do every good work. Hence it comes to signify to *join perfectly*, to *finish*, to *complete*, to bring to perfection any thing: “God in his good providence so ordering and disposing things, and by his grace so aiding you, that you may do what is well pleasing in his sight.” See Ephes. iii. 16, 17. Philip. ii. 13. Col. i. 11.—*Through Jesus Christ.* They had the opportunity, through the gospel and grace of Christ, to work out their own salvation; and the wish is, that God would so direct and govern things, as to let them always have opportunity of doing what was acceptable in his sight, and always enable them so to do.

Ver. 22. Suffer the word of exhortation] Take in good part the exhortation I here send, which is but a brief one. The apostle seems to have concluded his epistle in the preceding verse, and to add these words by way of postscript. He begs them to accept what he had written with kindness, on account of the importance of the subject, and the conscientiousness of the manner; informs them, with some degree of exultation, of Timothy's being set at liberty; proposes to come with him to see them; sends his salutations to all of them; and wishes them an increase of grace, in a manner like that observable in St. Paul's former epistles, and which is an authenticating proof, among innumerable others, that this epistle likewise came from him. We may also infer the same from the appellation of *our brother*, given to Timothy in the next verse; which is peculiar to St. Paul. See Col. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. 1 Thes. iii. 2. Philemon, ver. 1. He is often spoken of in other places as a *fellow-labourer* with St. Paul, but taken notice of by no other of the apostles: whence it is obvious to conclude, that as St. Paul

mentions

23 Know ye that *our* ^k brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly,

^k Acts 16. 7—3 & 17. 14. & 19. 22. & 20. 4. Rom. 16. 21. 1 Cor. 4. 17. Phil. 2. 19, 16. 1 Tim. 1. 2, 18. 2 Tim. 1. 5. Rev. 7. 17. Rom. xvii. 1 Cor. 16. 14—21. 2 Cor. 13. 12, 13.

mentions him in every one of his epistles except those to the Galatians and to Titus; the mentioning him in this epistle to the Hebrews is a good concurring circumstance, that St. Paul was the true author of it.

Inferences.—While, from a view of the epistle before us, we consider as entirely abrogated the many ceremonies and expensive sacrifices of the *Mosaic law*; let it be an additional encouragement to every *Christian*, to abound more and more in those of *brotherly love*, unfeigned benevolence, and real charity; rejoicing that the God of our lives, who gives us all we are, and all we enjoy, will condescend to regard our humble oblations. And let our brethren in Christ be remembered with that distinguishing affection which suits the relation in which we stand to them: and in whatever bonds of affliction they may be bound, let us endeavour to make their fetters sit lighter upon them, by every thing which our compassionate assistance can do for that purpose; *considering ourselves as in the body.*

That we may be thus ready to all such kind offices, be it our care to subdue the *love of money* in our hearts, *which is the root of all evil.* May we learn, (and oh! that divine grace may effectually teach us,) to moderate our desires; to be contented with what Providence allots us, whether more or less; and to *trust in God* as to the supply of our future wants. Well may we not only *trust*, but even *boast* in him, when we consider in how endearing a manner he hath declared, and with such reiterated promises, that if we continue to trust in him, *he will never leave us*; that *he will not, yea, he will not forsake us.* Surely, the language of the most cheerful and courageous faith well corresponds to that of so gracious and soul-reviving a promise. Let *faith* then put a reality into it, or rather glory in it; especially as *Jesus Christ*, in whom this, and all the promises, are confirmed to his faithful people, is the *same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

And let this thought support us, under those breaches which may be made on the church by *death.* Christ ever lives to guard and protect it, and to maintain those great truths, which in every age have been the joy and confidence of his people. Be our attachment to him therefore preserved inviolable, and the purity of our souls unspotted; nor let us ever fear to share in *His reproach*; but cheerfully go, as it were, *out of the camp* to him, who suffered crucifixion for us *without the gates* of the city. Were we called to endure *martyrdom* for his sake, he would only lead us out of a mean and precarious tabernacle; for we have here no continuing city: but then, he will conduct us, if we are found faithful to him, to a city so *durable*, that its *foundations* are elsewhere represented by rocks of solid *gems*; so glorious, that its *pavements* are described as of *gold*, and its gates of *pearl.* May our faith be daily beholding it as near, and may we feel every day more of its attractive influence, to render us superior to all that earth can promise, and to all which it can threaten, while we are passing thither. Under his guardianship, let us daily

be offering the sacrifice of praise,—the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name; as well knowing that while we are on our journey to the new Jerusalem, no mountain can be so steep and rugged, no valley so deep and gloomy, as not to admit of the songs of Sion.

Let those, whom God in his providence hath called to *pre- side over* the souls of others, remember to *watch over* them with a becoming diligence, considering that an impartial account will shortly be required;—considering, that if they do not properly conduct themselves in this important office, *the blood of those who perish* by their neglect, must be required at their hands; and let the people committed to their care, be concerned that the faithful servants of Christ may discharge their office *with joy, and not with grief*; that they may not from time to time be sent with groanings and with tears to the presence of their great Master, to lament the obstinacy, perverseness, and rebellion of those, over whom God hath made them *watchmen and shepherds.* The grief indeed would now sensibly affect the *minister*; yet, on the whole, as he would be to God a *sweet savour* in Christ, *in them that perish*, as well as in *them that believe*, the greatest detriment would fall on *those who have made* such ungrateful returns to the divine goodness, and to *their fidelity.*

That all other duties may be more regularly and properly discharged, let private Christians pray earnestly for their ministers; for those especially who make it apparent that they desire to *maintain always a good conscience*; and that, whatever sacrifices they may be called to make to it, they are *determined in all things to live reputably and honourably*; so that the *ministry may not be blamed*, but rather the Christian profession in general adorned and dignified. And God grant that none but persons of such a character may be introduced into the *ministry*, or supported and countenanced in it!

Let *pastors and people* be often looking to Him, who is the *great Shepherd of the sheep*, and who has bought us all with the *blood of the everlasting covenant.* Ever may the thoughts of that *blood* engage us to regard him with all due veneration and love: ever may we be looking to *him*, who, through this blessed Saviour, appears as the *God of peace*, for every blessing we respectively need; that, being faithful unto death, we may eternally reap all the blessings of that everlasting covenant!

We all need his gracious influence to implant in us the first principles of the divine life; and we need these principles to *make us perfect to do his will*, and to *work in us those things* which may render us more completely *pleasing in his sight.* Let therefore a humble dependance on his grace be daily maintained and zealously expressed; considering of what infinite importance it is to be *acceptable in the sight of God*, and to *approve ourselves* at all times to *him.*

To this blessed and important end, may *grace be with us all*,—and continue with us, from the first entrance on the Christian life, through the whole course of it, till finally it *present*

I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over

you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

*present us blameless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Having warned them against apostacy, and set before them the excellency of the gospel dispensation, the apostle concludes with exhorting them to the practice of those duties which must adorn their holy profession.

1. To mutual and fervent love. *Let brotherly love continue, cultivate this blessed temper, and abide and abound in the exercise of it towards each other.*

2. To hospitality. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; those who travelled to preach the gospel; or by persecution were driven from their native homes; or whose distressed circumstances pleaded for this kind relief; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, as Abraham and Lot.*

3. To Christian sympathy with the afflicted. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and tenderly feeling for their miseries; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body, and liable to the same sufferings, and fellow-members in the same mystical body of Christ.*

4. To chastity. *Marriage is honourable in all, when entered into according to the divine prescription; and the bed undefiled by any forbidden and impure embraces: but whomsoever God will judge, and execute upon them condign punishment, if they repent not of the evil of their ways.*

5. To contentment. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, free from the immoderate pursuit of worldly wealth, inordinate care about it, idolatrous delight in, and reluctance to part with it; and be content with such things as ye have, satisfied in the portion which God's providence hath allotted you, and envying none their superior affluence: for he, who is able to supply all your wants, whilst in the way of duty and honest industry you depend upon him, hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; for what was spoken particularly to Joshua, shall be fulfilled to all the faithful, respecting all their concerns, temporal and spiritual, who shall be under the divine blessing, guidance, and protection. So that we may boldly say, with the Psalmist, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me; greater is he that is for us, than all that are against us; and the devices of wicked men, or wicked devils, he can over-rule, and even make them work together for our good.*

6. To imitate their deceased pastors, and to obey their living guides.

[1.] To imitate the good examples of their departed spiritual teachers. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God in time past,*

and have now finished their testimony: *whose faith follow, hold fast the doctrines which they preached, and copy after the holy lives that they led, considering the end of their conversation, how singly they aimed at the glory of God in life, and what a happy exit they made at death; and well may we desire that our last end may be like theirs. And though the best of ministers are dying men, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls ever lives to feed his faithful flock; even Jesus Christ, the glorious object of our faith and hope, the same, unchangeable in his nature, yesterday, in all past ages, and to-day, and for ever, and the everlasting portion of his faithful saints, as your true spiritual guides have taught you. Be not therefore carried about with divers and strange doctrines, different from that unadulterated gospel which they preached to you: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, and fixed in its dependence on the almighty power of God in Jesus Christ, as the foundation of all hope, and peace, and holiness, in time and eternity; and not seduced by Judaizing teachers with any pretences that the Mosaic ritual is still in force, and that a difference of meats and drinks, and such like things, is necessary to be observed in order to acceptance with God; all which are now abrogated, and have not profited them that have been occupied therein; even when they were in force, they were unable to purge the conscience, and make him who did the service perfect; and much less can they now profit, when they are abolished. We need none of the Levitical sacrifices to feast upon; we have one infinitely better; an altar and sacrifice, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle; for no part of the sin-offering under the law was to be eaten; but the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary, on the great day of atonement, by the high priest for the sin of the people, are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people, his spiritual Israel, with his own blood, suffered without the gate, before he went up to heaven, the true sanctuary, there to plead the atonement which he had made. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach; turning our backs upon the temple and all its ritual services, founding no expectations upon them, but cleaving in faith and love to Christ alone, content to be treated with insult, reproach, or cruelty for his sake, boldly carrying our crosses to Calvary after him, and ready, if need be, to die for his sake. For here we have no continuing city: this polluted world is not our rest, nor do we desire to take up our rest here below; but we seek one to come, a city that hath abiding foundations, whose maker and builder is God, where saints and angels, and Jesus himself dwelleth. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, since all sacrifices of atonement are at an end, and praise and blessing for redeeming love are the services now*

* A List of the Writers referred to, or quoted, in the Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews:—Albert, Avery, Lord Barrington, Barrow, Bates, Bergelius, Beza, Blackwall, Bos, Bishop Burnet, Calamy, Calmet, Cassali, Chrysostom, Craddock, Diodati, Dodridge, Duntze, Elmer, Estlin, Bishop Fell, Bishop Gibson, Green, Grotius, Hallett, Hammond, Harris, Heylin, Heychius, Bishop Hoadley, Bishop Hopkins, Jackson, Kennicott, Laroner, Leigh, Infant, Limborch, Locke, Margev, Markland, Justin Martyr, Mede, Michaelis, Millar, Mills, Owen, Parkhurst, Bishop Pearson, Peirce, Peters, Pyle, Raphelius, Saurin, Schenck, Scott, Shaw, Bishop Sherlock, Bishop Smalridge, Spencer, Suicer, Sykes, Taylor, Tertulian, Archbishop Tillotson, Vitringa, Bishop Warburton, Watts, Weitten, Whitby, Bishop Wilkins, and Wolfius.

25 ¹ Grace be with you all. Amen.

¹ Rom. 16. 20, 24. ¹ Cor. 16. 23. ² Cor. 13. 14. Gal. 6. 18. Eph. 6. 24. Phil. 4. 23. Col. 4. 18. ¹ Thes. 5. 28. ² Thes. 3. 18. Rev. 22. 21.

required at our hands; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name, an oblation well pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Not that we must rest merely in words, but our works also must testify our grateful acknowledgments of the divine mercy; therefore to do good, and to communicate of your substance to the needy, especially to those of the household of faith, according to your ability, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, and for the Saviour's sake will bless the offerer.

[2.] They are enjoined, as to follow the examples of their departed pastors, so to obey their living guides. Obey them that have the rule over you, your spiritual teachers, who instruct you in the word of God; and submit yourselves meekly to their reproofs and admonitions: for they watch for your souls, to guard you from deceivers, to warn you from approaching dangers, to feed you in the pastures of ordinances, and to help you on your heavenly way; and this they do with all holy jealousy, zeal, and diligence, knowing the solemn reckoning which they must one day make, as they that must give an account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that would be not only grievous to them, but is most unprofitable for you, whose condemnation would be highly aggravated by all their fruitless labours bestowed upon you. Note; (1.) Ministers can never too often or too deeply consider the awful account which they must one day give before their eternal Judge. (2.) When we have delivered our souls, then it becomes our people's care to see that their profiting appears: if they trifle with our message, their blood lies upon their own heads.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Recommends himself to their prayers. Pray for us, that we may be wise, vigilant, zealous, successful; and this will be your own benefit; for the more our people pray for us, the more profiting will they receive from us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly, to discharge our awful trust with fidelity, and so to behave as to confute the calumnies of our enemies, approving ourselves to God, and enjoying the testimony of a good conscience. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner; and that you may

again reap the fruit of my labours among you. Note; (1.) Every faithful minister, however maligned by wicked men, has the testimony of God and a good conscience, and that is his rejoicing. (2.) Mercies are doubly sweet, which come in answer to prayer.

2. He in return offers up his own prayers on their behalf. Now the God of peace, our reconciled God, that hath spoken peace to our consciences, and hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, in token of his perfect satisfaction in his undertaking, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, shed to procure our peace and pardon, and all the blessings of grace and glory for his faithful people, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, enabling you to go from strength to strength, till you arrive at the perfection of knowledge, holiness, and blessedness, in glory everlasting, working in you, by his own almighty grace, that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, by whom alone every spiritual gift descends upon us; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen! to whom all the praise is to be ascribed. Note; God must have all the glory of our salvation from the beginning to the end; for we are nothing, and he is all in all.

3. He exhorts them very affectionately to attend to what he had said, and informs them of Timothy's release. And I beseech you, brethren dearly beloved, suffer the word of exhortation: take in good part what I have said, and receive the comfort which it is intended to communicate to you; for I have written a letter unto you in few words, when the subject would have admitted of great enlargement. Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty from his bonds for Christ; with whom, if he come to me shortly, I will see you.

4. He concludes with his affectionate salutations. Salute all them that have the rule over you, your faithful ministers, and all the saints in Christ Jesus. They of Italy salute you, wishing you the best of blessings. Grace be with you all. Amen! May the everlasting love of God in Christ, with all its transcendently blessed effects, be with you in time, and continue to influence and guide you, till you arrive at his kingdom of glory in eternity!